AarinSecret

Fall 2007 #2

ANIME Info

Saint Beast

Fuyu no Semi

Ikoku Irokoi Romantan

Manga Reviews

Pink

Cantarella

Gorgeous Carat

The Other Side of You

Movie Reviews

No Regret

Crystal Boys

More Yaoi: *My Anti-Drug*

Scanlation vs License:

Don't Make Me Choose!

Interview with Yanagoya

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Fall/Autumn 2007

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Cover layout by: Dai-kun

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Yaoi:
My Anti-drug

My yaoi desktop — *"It's a girl if you like…"*

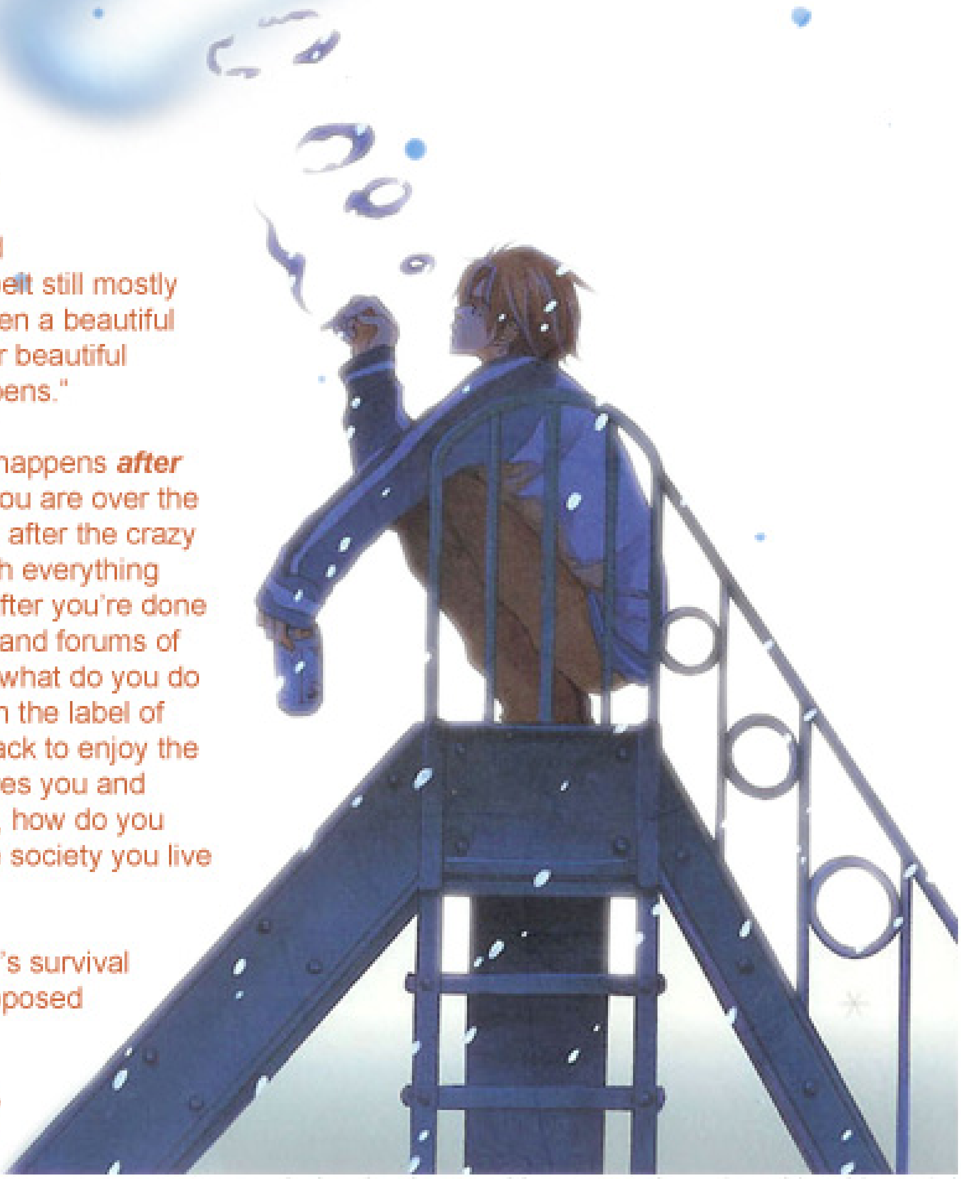
written by Kitty
Edit by szto
Layout by n0rth_s34

The first article in the *anti drug series* dealt with the beginnings of one's obsession with yaoi and Boy's Love. It was about how you feel your way around the extensive culture and massive content that exists – albeit still mostly underground - in the area of "when a beautiful manga/anime boy meets another beautiful manga/anime boy and love happens."

This time I plan to discuss what happens ***after*** one becomes a yaoi fan. Once you are over the **wow(!)** of finding the pot of gold, after the crazy scramble to download/buy/snatch everything with lovesick boys in it passes, after you're done with the search for communities and forums of people with the same madness, what do you do next? Once you are branded with the label of yaoi fangirl or fanboy and kick back to enjoy the comforts of a community that loves you and provides you with all your needs, how do you handle this new identity as in the society you live in?

I'm going to talk about a yaoi fan's survival skills in the great big world as opposed to the World Wide Web.

Let me start by saying that every fan – regardless of what they



© Takaku Shouko ~ Gekkou no Rankan ni Kuchinashi no Nioi are into – is different from the other. Some are content to be quiet and enjoy the pleasures of their favorite product in private. These are, for example, the music fans who have their rooms plastered with posters of their favorite band and buy every CD they put out but show no signs of their devotion once they step out of that shrine. Others are more vocal, and their degrees depend on their personality. They range from fans who show their liking of something by talking to friends and colleagues about it all the way up to crazy fanatics who dress up like their favorite rock star on a school day or paint their faces in the colors of their favorite team.

Yaoi fans are no exception to the rule. The difference lies in how society receives the knowledge of their passion over BL and how much of it they are willing to show. And because the subject – like it or not – is undeniably controversial, conflict comes as part of a package deal. After all, homosexuality in many societies is still considered a taboo. It all makes being a yaoi fan a tricky business, not just because of the persistent conservatism that surrounds us but also because Boy's Love is still a relatively unknown territory.

Let me give you an example from my own experience: Since before I was into yaoi I was always a moderately vocal fan of whatever I was into. Back in late 90's when I liked vampire stories and Goth I used to go on chats with fans online, join get-togethers (like the *California Bat's Day* event at Disney Land) and dress up as a bloodsucker every Halloween. My screen saver was always some vampire suckling on the neck of a hapless victim and I had t-shirts reading **"Got Blood?"** with dripping fangs on them. I never experienced any objection from other people or shocked anyone beyond some having to look twice at my outfits.

Once I left that culture behind and got into slash, and later yaoi, things changed. Of course in the beginning there were no conventions, no t-shirts and no fans aside from the fanfiction writers who had introduced me to the topic in the first place. Everything was in our minds, in the stories we wrote and halfway across the globe in Japan. The idea of "coming out" was the furthest from our thoughts, not to mention other people's imagination. After all, it's hard enough to explain yourself to a clueless bystander when you are a gay man who likes other men, imagine having to explain yourself as a straight woman who likes men with men in cartoons.

I remember once I was talking to one of my guy friends about my latest obsession - slash - and he thought I was talking about the lead guitarist of Gun's and Roses.

Thankfully I never had any problems with my parents. Although I lived with them they always made a point to remain resolutely naive about my bizarre obsessions. It is easy to imagine that *that* is not the case with most yaoi fans. Many younger fans have to keep a low profile so that their parents won't find out about their love for BL. It's not because they are doing something wrong like using drugs or getting involved in crime. On the contrary, a lot of yaoi products are geared at the teenage population and it even has a positive effect on them as it inspires them to draw or write or otherwise express themselves artistically. The problem however is, once again, the peculiarity of the subject. A mother might not find it surprising to find a poster of Justin Timberlake kissing a model hidden under her daughter's bed, but she is likely to be shocked out of her eyeballs if she found a picture of the manga version of him kissing a man. It might even

And so we drool......
PLAYBOY
He didn't even get in touch with us
I wanna watch...
GIVE US THE DETAILS!!
BBoy

© Shiuko Kano ~ I'm Not Your Stepping Stone!

raise questions in her head about her daughter's sexuality. The issue would have been easier to explain and clarify if yaoi was as mainstream as Mr. Timberlake, but it is not. And it is hard to explain a liking for gay relationships if you yourself aren't gay, especially to your parents who watch your every move to make sure they would detect every slip. Therefore most teenagers keep it a secret.

Keeping 'it' a secret was never my intention, and even though I had no issues with my family the fun started when I stepped out of the house. School and work place introduced another challenge. Although I was lucky to attend a Video Game and Animation school where most of the students were anime fans, the distance between liking anime and loving yaoi still existed. Aside from that, since guys outnumbered girls ten to one at the school and my entire group of friends were guys, it was both fun and challenging to establish my identity among them as the crazy girl who liked guys being together. Fortunately all my friends were open minded and it ended up becoming an inside joke among us, one that we brought up on and off on occasions. I suspect that even they enjoyed being in on the secret where no other guy was the wisest hearing us talk about lemons and nonconsensual sexual encounters.

However there were still awkward incidents to be had outside my circle of confidants. As I had this habit of always choosing a yaoi themed image for my desktop wallpaper, it happened more than once that people would walk by my computer and pause. The guy would crane his neck, stare at the image for a few seconds, and ask me the inevitable question: "That's a girl, right?" *pointing at the uke* To which I always answered: "If it makes you happy, yes."

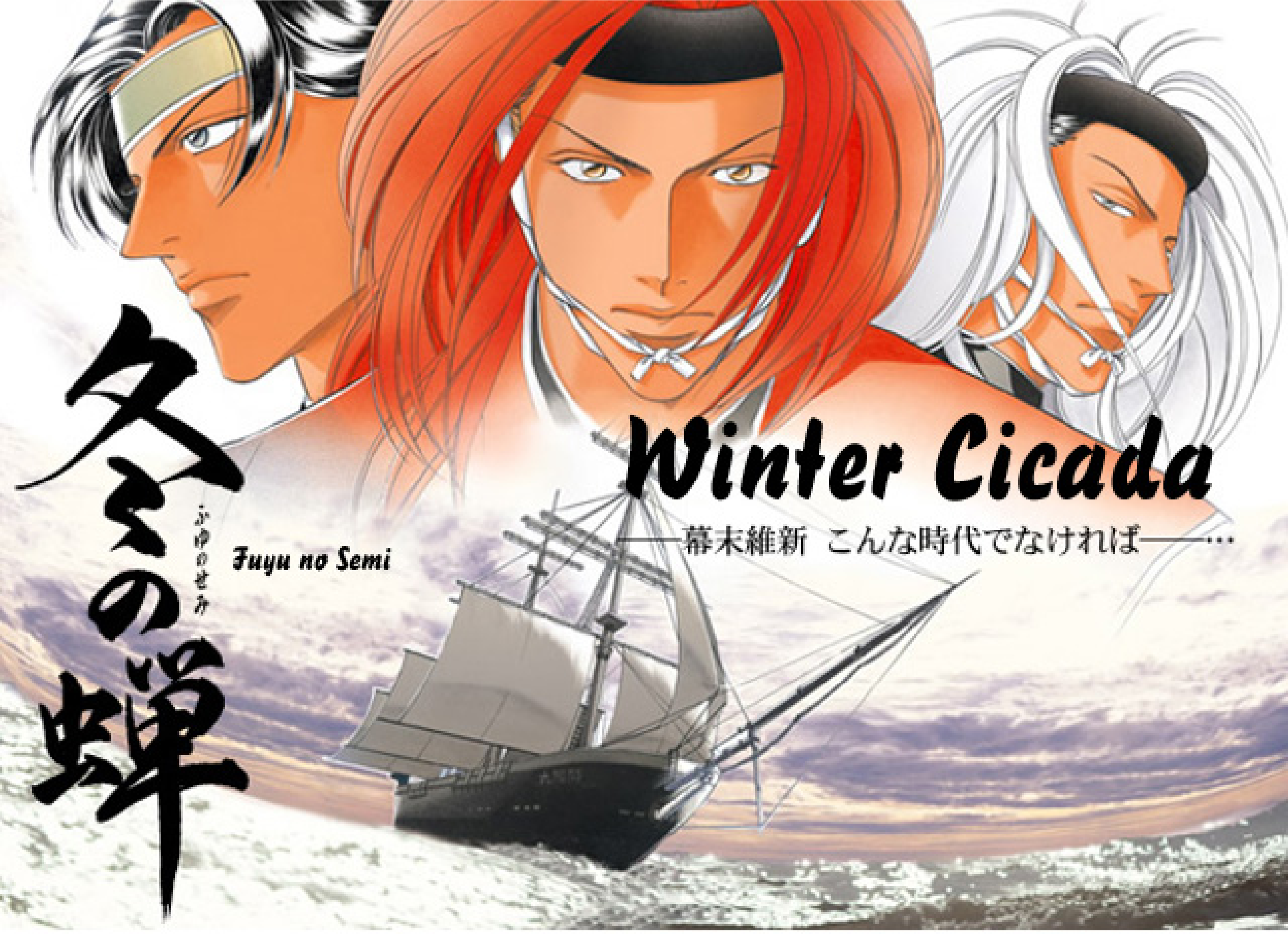
Back in 2004 when **Aarin's forum** was still small and new, I was once browsing an image thread at college when the image of a smoking bishounen caught my attention. I turned to my friend to show it to him and start a possibly interesting discussion about manga art and underage smoking when I heard a voice behind me say: "What the hell is **THAT**?" Too late I noticed he was pointing at my computer screen and realized what I hadn't noticed at first: at the bottom of the image, right below the smoking bishounen was a young boy hugging a plushie shaped like a phallus with a happy face. I was stunned and unsure what to tell the guy who had caught me looking at such an odd picture and probably didn't know anything about BL, shota or the likes. In a desperate attempt to save myself I scrolled down the thread which caused me to bring up the next image, this one of a guy in a slutty pose with an open fly. The guy behind me must have popped a vein in his brain as he began crying in outrage asking me what this page was and what was wrong with me. Despite all the fiasco it still ended up as a hilarious incident.

I was always lucky to be able to bring people to the good side of my passion. What I realized about society's stand regarding yaoi was that you could divide them into two groups:

1) The female anime fans who are almost all yaoi fans too. And;
2) The rest, who if they are your friends and you spend time with them, could easily be turned into yaoi friendly folks with whom you could chat about your passion. Some would be genuinely interested while others will most likely use it as a source of humor.

Both have provided me endless joy. Although nothing compares to talking to a yaoi fan, giggling and shouting your love for this or that pairing, the shock value you get out of unsuspecting victims of your suggestive desktop image or them flipping through a doujinshi you accidentally left on your desk isn't bad either. I'm glad to admit, at least where I live, the society has been nothing but open, curious and generally harmless towards this yaoi fangirl's strange and outlandish hobby. That might not be the case for all yaoi fans though, so some level of caution, and consideration, might be required to live happily with the straight loving straight people.

~Kitty@aarinfantasy.com



Story/Chapters translation: Kurogane
Character Profile translation: Henna
Layout: Aarin   Editing: s2to

物語 The Story

"If only we weren't born in this era... Perhaps we would have been able to stay with each other for much longer..."

It is the Bakumatsu era, a period of great unrest.
When a retainer of the Tokugawa Shogunate, Akizuki Kouichirou and a warrior of the Choushuu fief, Kusaka Touma cross paths, they fall passionately for each other. However, fate is cruel to them and they are forced to part when Tokugawa and Choushuu turn rivals. This rivalry soon paves a way to war.

"If only we weren't born in this era, we could have stayed together for so much longer..."

They hoped "Someday, time will allow us to be together" but time is ultimately heartless and that was not to be.

Breaking past the tempestuous Bakumatsu restoration, the passion of Akizuki and Kusaka!
『A past life story of Iwaki's and Katou's (from Haru wo Daiteita)』

第一巻 Chapter 1

"A man who spoke of the same ideals as mine...
I couldn't take my eyes off his silhouette until the water completely obstructed my view"

It is 1862 and the execution of the plan to set afire the British Embassy is carried out by men of Choushuu's Takasugi Shinsaku. One of Choushuu's retainers, Kusaka Touma, is an advocate for Japan to open its door to foreigners. He tries to put a stop to this act of violence but is too late and the embassy is engulfed in flames. Kusaka does not make his escape fast enough and is pursued across town. At this time, he is to have a fateful encounter with a man by the name of Akizuki Kouichirou. As a retainer of the Shogunate, Akizuki is an arch enemy of Choushuu's yet he lets Kusaka go after saying: "This is no time for a revolt. We have to open our country up to foreigners if we are to be on par with them".

A few years pass after that and Kusaka coincidentally meets up with Akizuki again. A retainer of Choushuu's and one of the Shogunate, two people who were supposed to be arch enemies, begin to spend time together in a place where no one would find them. It does not take them long to develop feelings for each other but...

The first chapter records the fateful encounter of Kusaka and Akizuki until the time they meet again.

Screenshots from Chapter 1

第二巻

Chapter 2

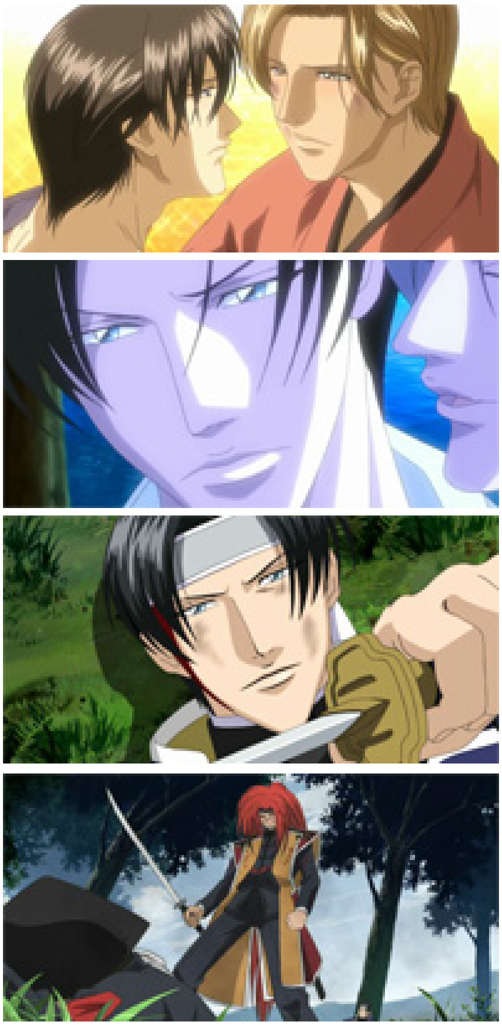
"I want you to live... If you're alive, my wish would come true. And I want for only that wish to..."

It is 1863. The Choushuu retainers are rebelling against the Shogunate and pushing for the expulsion of foreigners. At this rate, direct confrontation between the Choushuu fief and the Shogunate would be inevitable. Right then, the chief retainer, Sufu, brings Kusaka word of a chance to study abroad in England. Kusaka immediately jumps at this offer as he does not want to fight the Shogunate which Akizuki is part of.

"Please don't be mad and hear me out! I have feelings for you."
Akizuki is slightly surprised by Kusaka's confession but he is nevertheless just as much in love with the pure, straightforward Kusaka and the foresight he exhibited. That night, they become one and with the promise of a reunion, Kusaka makes his way to England. However, they will soon be swept into the great whirlpool of uncertainty the era creates...

The second part records the revolution from the period where Kusaka and Akizuki meet again to when Kusaka begins his travel and the breaking out of the Boshin War.

Screenshots from Chapter 2



第三巻

Chapter 3

"Even in a wintry period like this, because the time I spent with you was not a lie..."

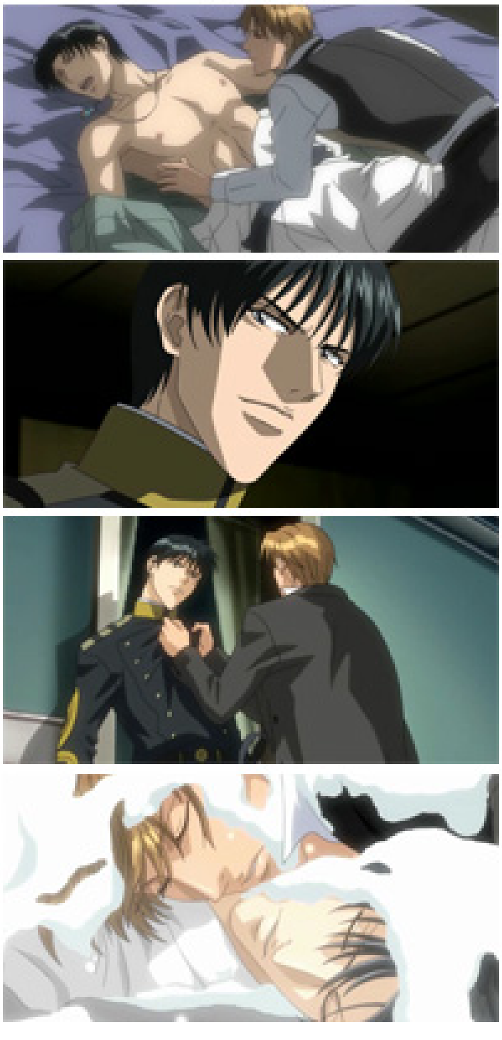
It is now 1872 and the end of the Boshin War brings the beginning of present day Japan. However, there are still those who do not wish to prolong the restoration.

One of them is Aizawa, whose beloved is murdered by an assassin of the Shogunate. On the other hand, Kusaka, who has become a high-ranking official in the new government, keeps Akizuki hidden away in his house in Azabu. Akizuki, who yearned for a warrior's death on the battlefield and was denied it, continues to hope for a place to die and has become nothing more than a living corpse. Seeing Akizuki in such a state, Kusaka embraces him, hoping to feel for any proof that Akizuki is still alive...

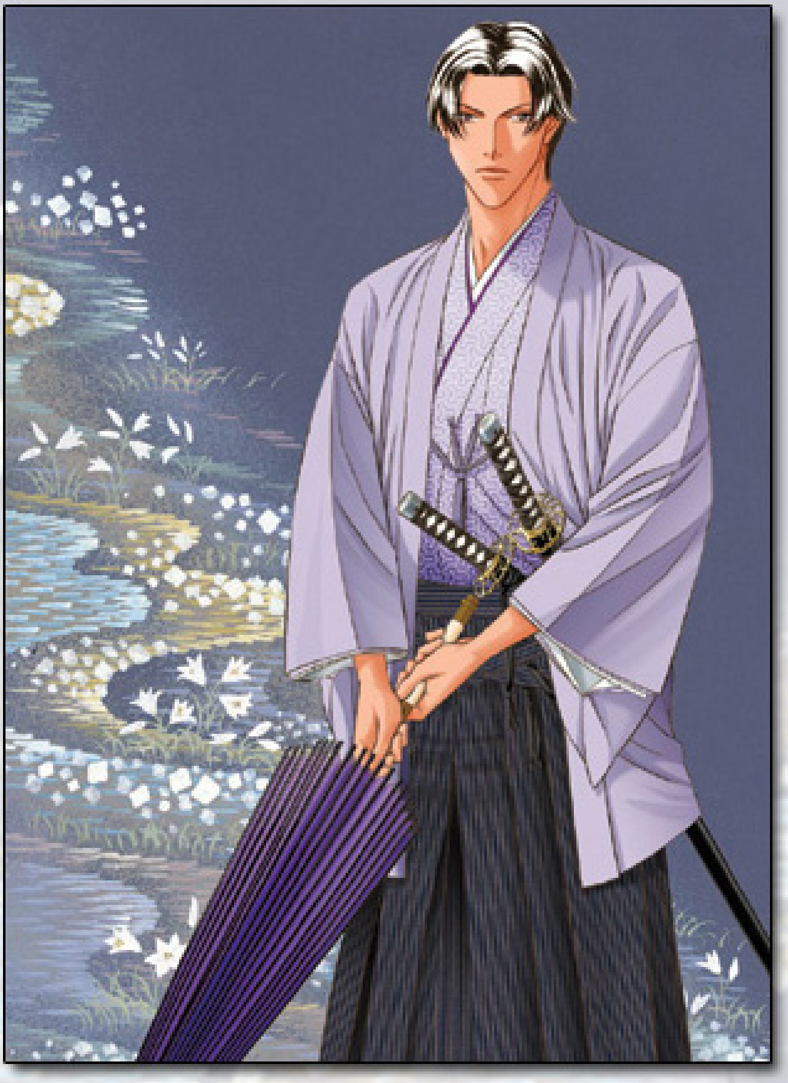
But Kusaka is also in support of the restoration, impatiently awaiting the arrival of a new world that would not seem to come. At the same time, Aizawa finds out about Akizuki being hidden in the Kusaka household and begins plotting...

The final part records the stormy revolution, Akizuki, Kusaka and Aizawa face the snow-covered, silver world they are in.

Screenshots from Chapter 3



Character Profile



Akizuki Keiichirou

(voice actor: Morikawa Toshiyuki)

冬の蝉

The eldest son of a high-ranking shogunal vassal (3000 koku stipend) of the Tokugawa Bakufu.*

He has a peaceful and progressive way of thinking. He is an adult-age son who has not yet succeeded the family headship. After the surrender of Edo Castle, the Tokugawa clan moved to the Suruga province, and while the members of Akizuki's family followed them as their retainers, Akizuki himself defied the objections of his father and others and enlisted in Enomoto's *dassou-gun* (literally: "escaped army").

[note: Enomoto Takeaki escaped from Edo with the warships of the fallen Tokugawa shogunate, rather than handing them over to the Meiji government.] After passing the Battle of Aizu, he rendezvouses with Enomoto's army at Sendai and reaches Goryokaku. **

* Note: see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koku

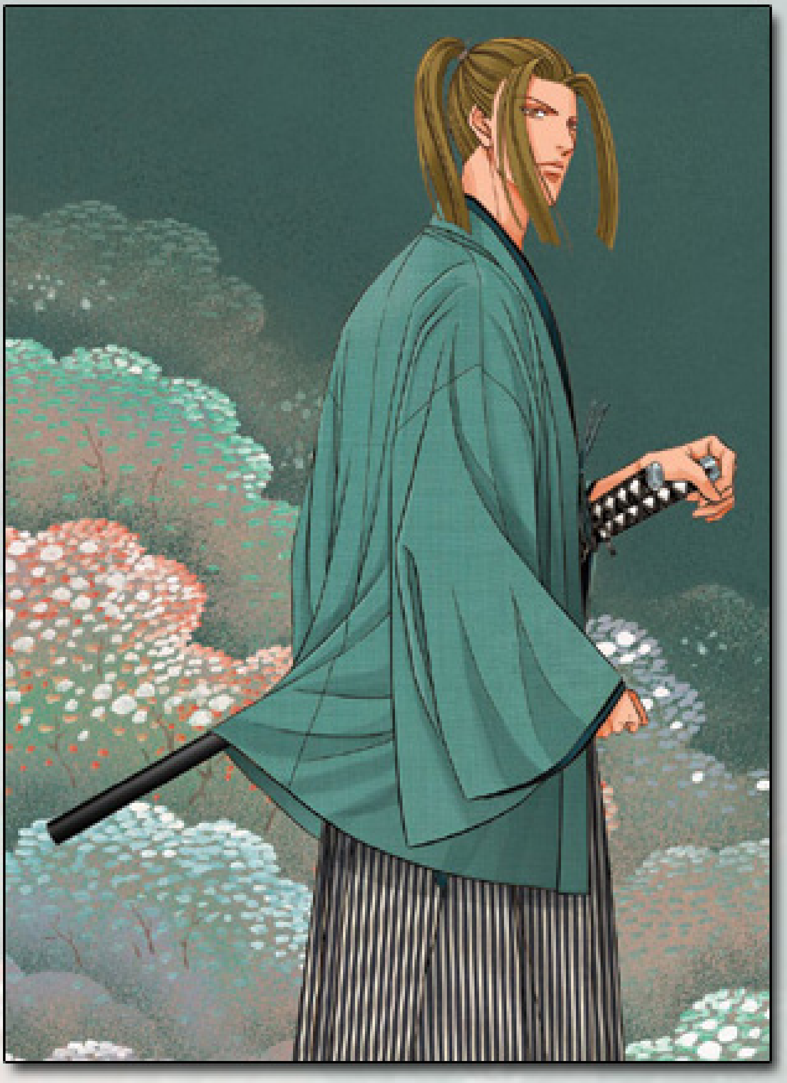
** Note: see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goryokaku

Character Profile

Kusaka Touma

(voice actor: Miki Shinichirou)

冬の蝉



The eldest son of a retainer to a joufu in the Choshu clan* 500 koku stipend. Though he is in the pro-joui Choshu clan, he himself favors an open-door policy. He is also an adult-age son who has not yet succeeded the family headship. During his study abroad he receives, along with word that his father has fallen critically ill, the unexpected news that imperial rule has been restored, and he returns to Japan. He succeeds the head of the family, and thanks to the knowledge he gained from the Western world and his meritorious service in the Boshin War, he quickly rises to greatness in the Meiji government.**

---

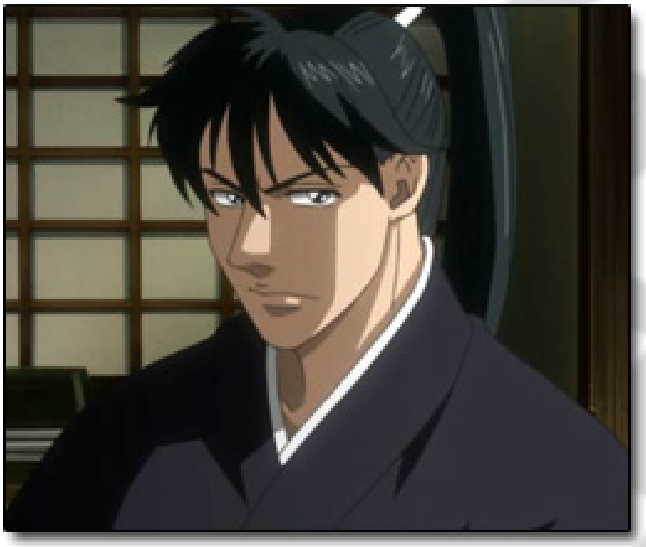
* Note: see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sankin_kotai ;
joufu referred to those daimyo who resided permanently in Edo

** Note: joui = expulsion of foreigners and foreign influence

Character Profile

Aizawa Seinoshin

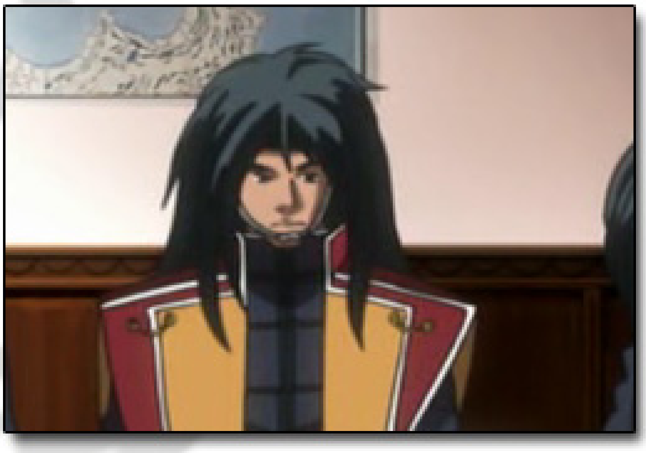
(voice actor: Morikubo Shoutarou)



Like Kusaka, the eldest son of a retainer to a joufu in the Choshu clan. 80 koku stipend. An adult-age son who has not succeeded the family headship. He is a member of the gotategumi, an organization known to be radical even among joui supporters, but he is not a thinker. He possesses the ability to see the underlying truth in the occasional trends of his times. In contrast to his own opportunistic self, Kusaka, who never compromises his opinions, is recognized by everyone and blessed with opportunities, and Aizawa develops a strong jealousy towards him.

Kuroda Ryousuke

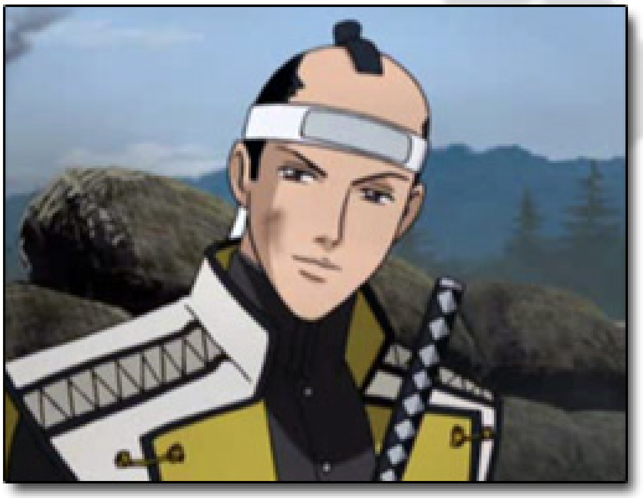
(voice actor: Hiromori Shingo)



The eldest son of Kuroda Saemon Kiyoyuki, a jokashi (castletown samurai) of the Satsuma clan in Kagoshima. He is a commander in the Imperial army, responsible for launching an all-out attack on the Bakufu forces which had barricaded themselves in Goryokaku. He was a staff officer who helped to plan the conquest of Hakodate.

Ootori Keisuke

(voice actor: Ookura Masaaki)

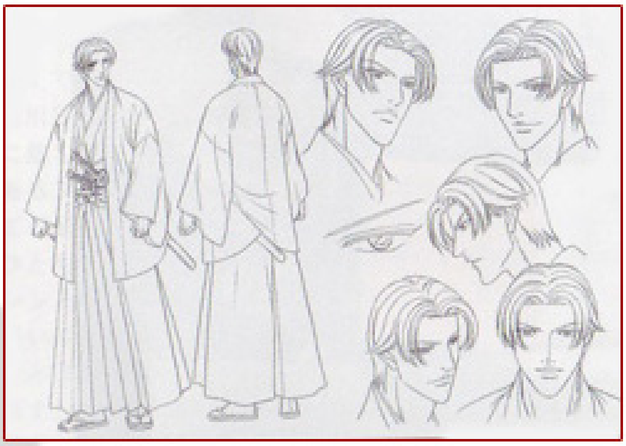


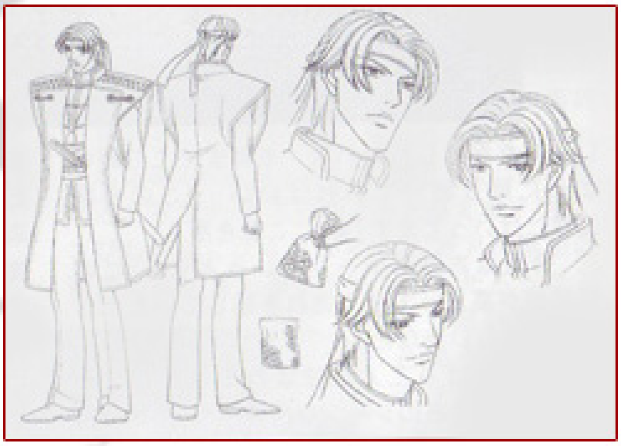
He was born into a family of doctors in the Ako domain of Harima province.

He rendezvouses with Enomoto Takeaki in Sendai and crosses over to Ezo, where he becomes the army magistrate for the government of the Republic of Ezo.

Character Creation

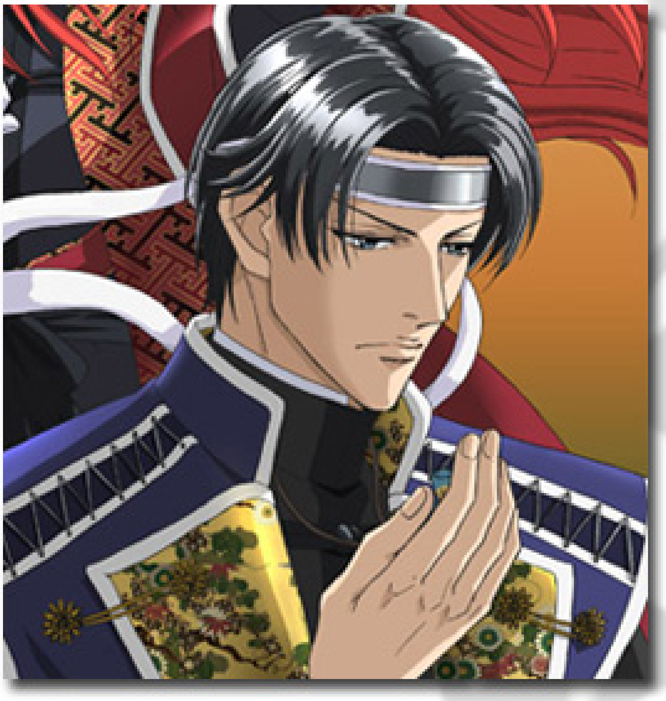
The creation of the main characters, as supervised by Nitta-sensei, and their particular points of interest.





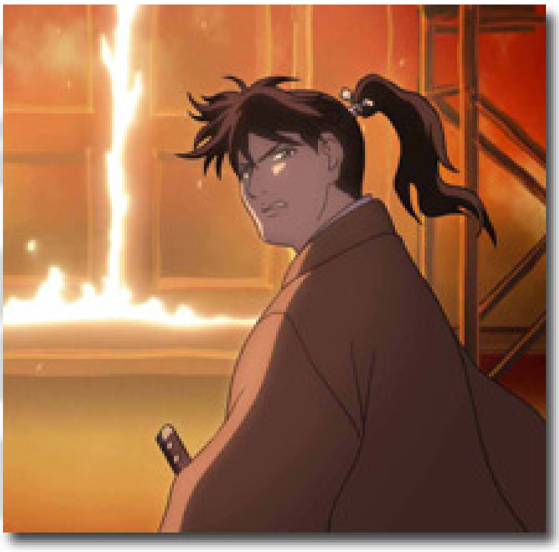
Akizuki Keiichirou

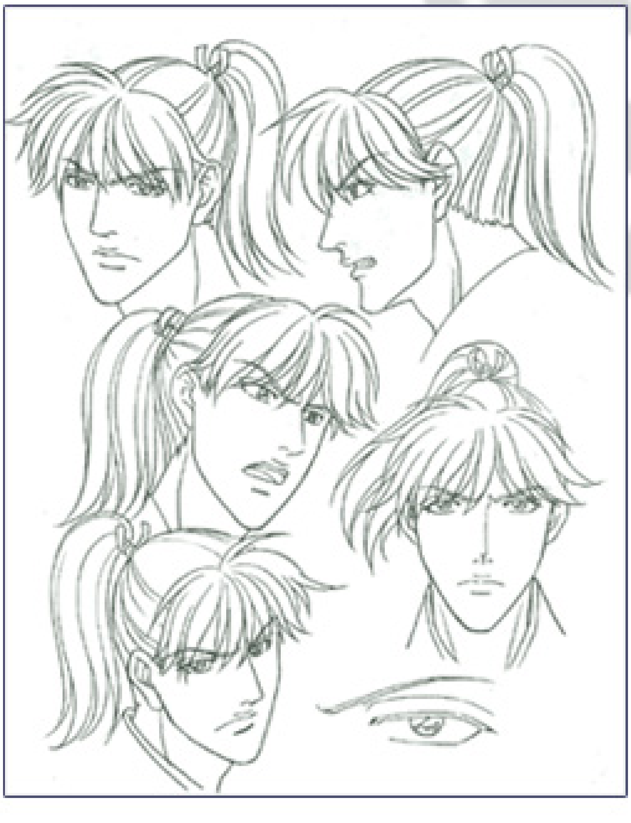
"Akizuki-san's clear, dignified eyes are definitely his major point."

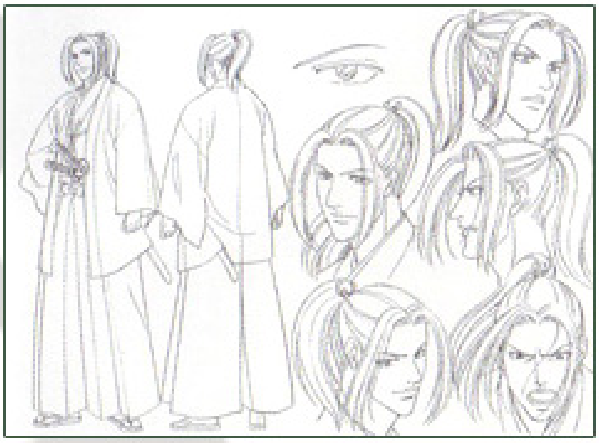


Aizawa Seinoshin

"It would have to be the hateful expression he sometimes happens to show."



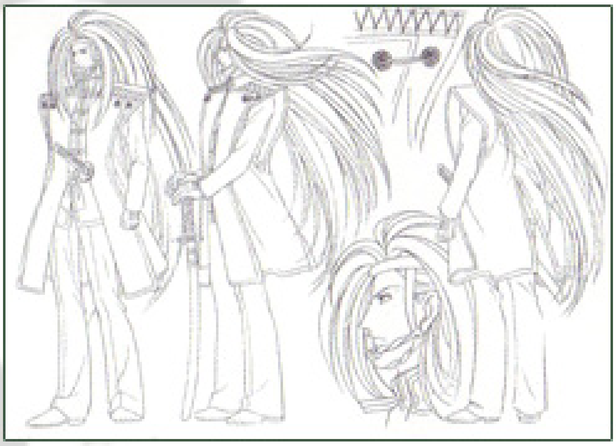


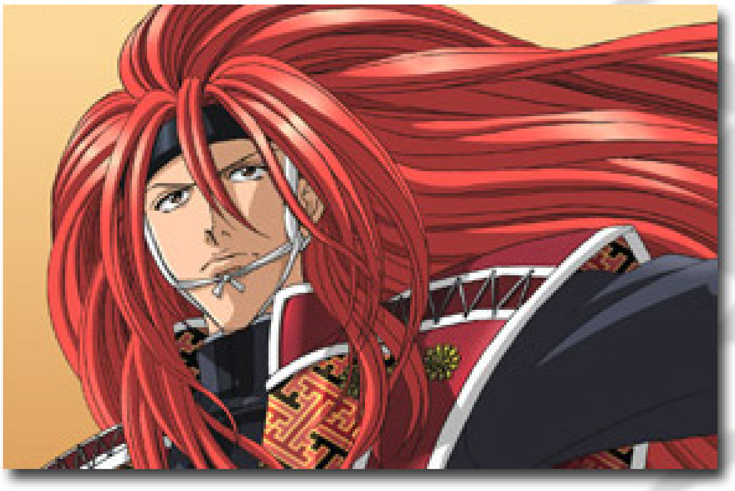


Akizuki Keiichirou

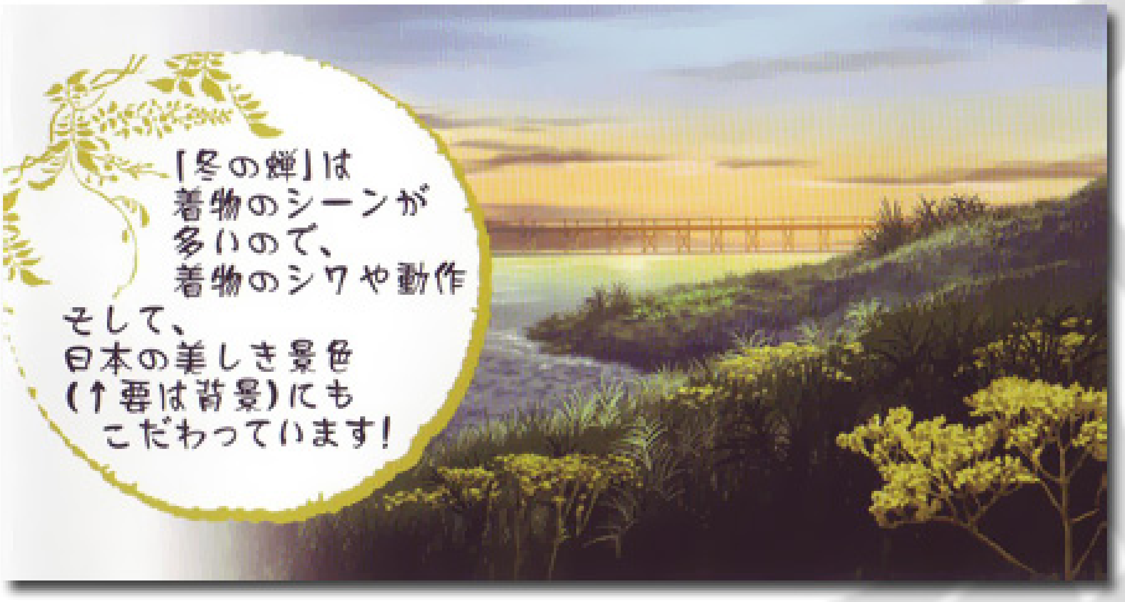
"I was very particular about the wide variety of his expressions. I guess the other thing would be the flutter of his shaguma in the wind." (laughs)

[note: shaguma = red bear, the name of the distinctive wigs worn by officers from the Tosa province]





"Winter Cicada has many kimono scenes, so I fuss over the wrinkles and the movements of the kimono, as well as Japan's beautiful scenery (background scenery is vital)!"


「冬の蝉」は
着物のシーンが
多いので、
着物のシワや動作
そして、
日本の美しき景色
（↑要は背景）にも
こだわっています！

Mafia Sistér
#blueye@irc.irchighway.net
Blueye
El hábitat natural de los bishies

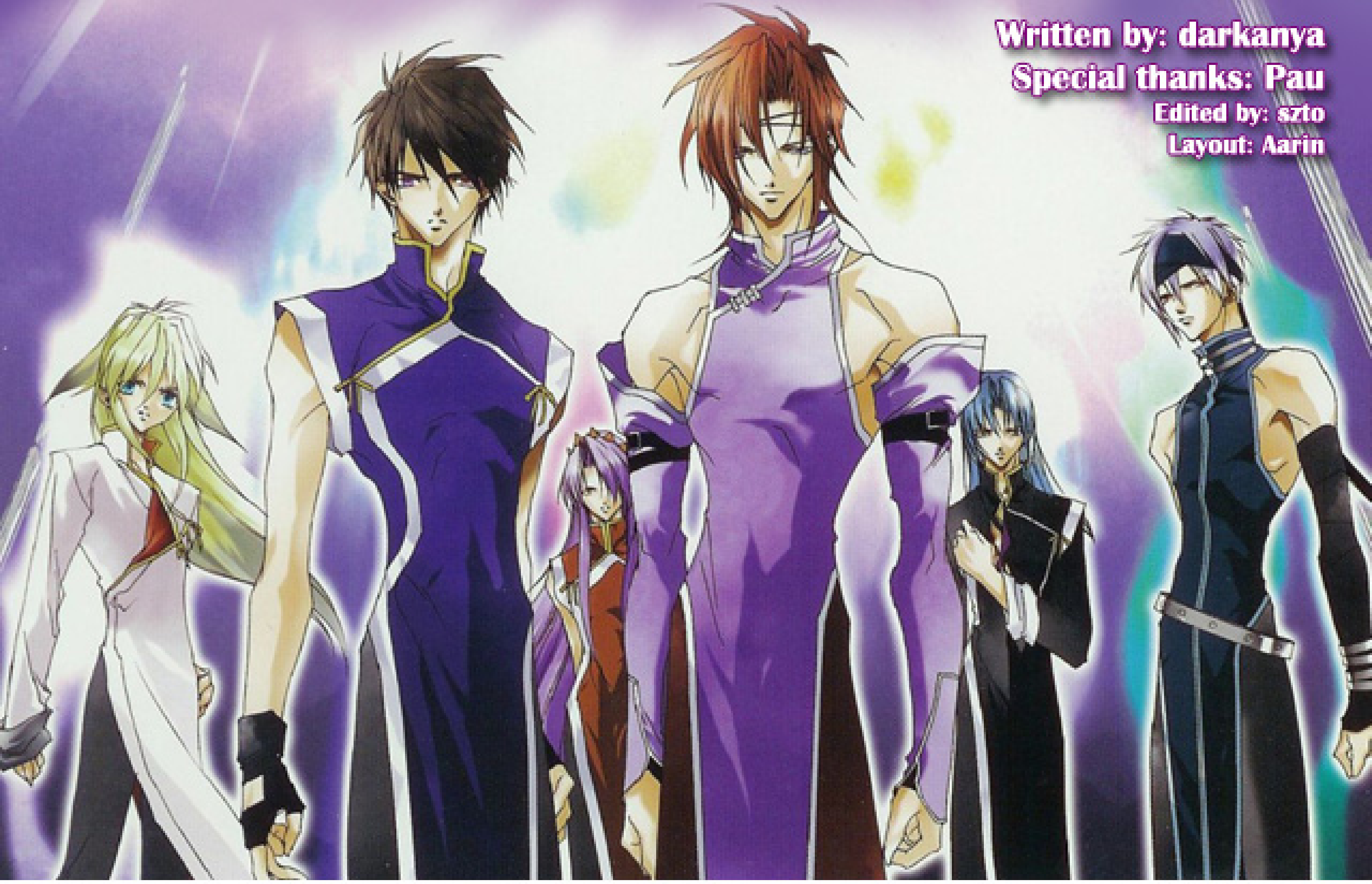
Scanlation Group:
Blueye

Is a scanlation group in Spanish dedicated to translate, edit and scan mangas yaoi and shonen-ai. In joint with Appassionato, Ayaoi and Team-Yaoi they share the forum: "Mafia Sisters".

http://www.yaoisisters.com

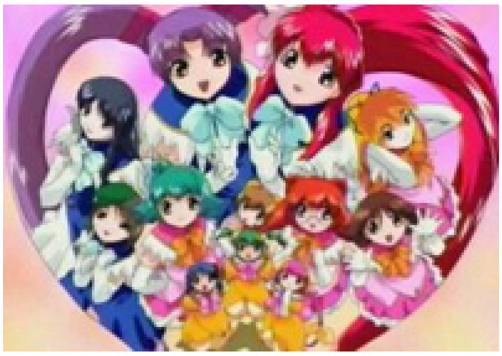
Saint Beast

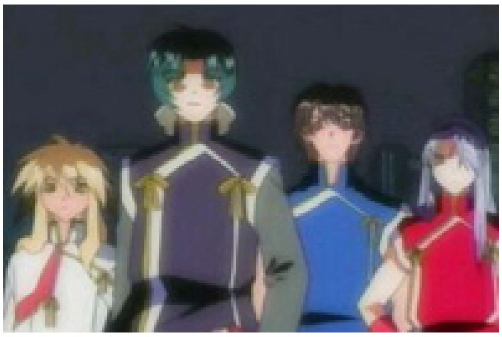
Written by: darkanya
Special thanks: Pau
Edited by: szto
Layout: Aarin



Saint Beast is a story about angels, gods and demons. Even though it's hard to believe, it started as a spin-off of the anime Tenshi no Shippo which was aired in 2000, so in order to understand its plot let's start by the beginning.

Tenshi no Shippo (2000)





Saint Beast is mentioned for the first time in the anime Tenshi no Shippo, in 2003. In the world of TnS there are guardian angels that were originally animals which became angels after their death. They are under the guidance of a Goddess and are given the task to protect humans (they call the human they must protect "master"). These guardian angels are not the same type of angels that were later introduced in the Saint Beast drama CDs and anime. Besides, the angels in this anime are all female, for the series is a sort of harem anime in which all the girls adore Goro, a guy who doesn't seem to have anything special (about him), but whom they must protect (because they used to be his pets and because he is special after all).

Among these guardian angels, the legend of the four Saint Beasts is well known, for they are the rulers of all animals: Seiryuu (Goh), Suzaku (Rey), Byakko (Gai) and Genbu (Shin).

The legend says that once upon a time, humans and animals were equal and lived together, until someday the balance was about to break because there weren't enough provisions for everyone and someone took the source of the power of the Saint Beasts (Genbu's shell, Seiryuu's sword, Suzaku's wings and Byakko's armor) in order to avoid a confrontation. It was because of that that humans became superior.

At one point in the series Goro starts being persuaded by four mysterious people into choosing 'brides' for the Saint Beasts, taking revenge on humans and (eventually) ruling over the world (yeah… I'm serious). The persuaders turn out to be the legendary Saint Beasts themselves, Goh, Gai, Shin and Rey, who have broken the seal that kept them prisoners and came back in order to regain their powers from Goro, the reincarnation of Seijya, a god-like being, half-human, half-animal, the one who originally stole their power and sealed them long ago. In the end, they give up on their objective and decide to respect Seijya's decision as it was the best thing that could be done at the time – seeing no better course of action to take in order to avoid a war between humans and animals.

Saint Beast – The Descent (2003)

In 2003 a second part of Tenshi no Shippo started airing, and at the same time the Saint Beasts got their own series which lasted only 6 episodes. Here those who don't know a thing about what happened in Tenshi no Shippo might get lost, because it is taken for granted that the viewer knows what the guardian angels are, where the Saint Beast came from and how they are related to the characters of TnS. For example, some of the girls from Tenshi no Shippo make an appearance in Saint Beast; the "master" they talk about is the human whom they are serving, and the girl who seems to like Shin is the one Shin had then chosen as his "bride".

When the story starts, Luca and Judas are introduced as "angels who were sealed away by the Saint Beasts after a battle against God, because they disobeyed His orders", and they plan to attack the guardian angels as a way to take revenge on the Saint Beasts.

The Goddess sends the Saint Beasts to Earth and asks them to discover the reason why guardian angels have been disappearing. Before departing, Seijya (the real spirit of Seijya, who has now fully awaken) gives them back what in Tenshi no Shippo had been mentioned as the source of their power: Genbu's shell, Seiryuu's sword, Byakko's armor… and well, he gives Rey Suzaku's "arrow", even though it had been said that the wings were the source of Suzaku's power and he wasn't able to get them back in Tenshi no Shippo.

The Saint Beasts end up having to face Luca and Judas, who take some of the guardian angels with them to Hell. There are lots of contradictions, not just between what had been said in Tenshi no Shippo and this story but also between what it is said here and in the drama CDs. While in the drama CDs the Saint Beasts are also against God's will, here they don't seem to know the reason why Luca and Judas were opposing Him. The story has an open ending, with the Saint Beasts deciding to beat Judas and Luca and set the guardian angels free.

Saint Beast
DVD
The First

Saint Beast -
Seiju Korin Hen Vol.1

Saint Beast
DVD
III
The Third

Saint Beast -
Seiju Korin Hen Vol.3

(There are 4 volumes for
Seiju Korin Hen)

Drama CDs, OVA, 2007 anime and others

The drama CDs started to come out in 2003, and tell the story of how the angels Goh, Shin, Rey, Gai, Judas and Luca were chosen by God (who is given the name of Zeus) as the six Saint Beasts and what happened after that, when they started to have to follow his orders and complete certain tasks.

The world of Tenshi no Shippo is left aside, starting with the fact that the guardian angels are not mentioned and the angels introduced are all male. At the beginning Zeus is kind, but as the story advances he becomes more and more evil and sometimes gives crazy orders, which makes the Saint Beasts want to rebel against him even more.

The 2005 OVAs take place before the story of drama CDs started and show how some of the characters met, besides showing the ceremony in which angels become “adults”. A part of the battle of the Saint Beasts against Zeus (from the drama CDs) is also shown, although not much is explained.

The 2007 anime Saint Beast – Angel Chronicles is an animated version of the story told in the drama CDs, which up until now have not really explained the reason why Judas and Luca became as evil as seen in Saint Beast – The Descent. Will that be explained later or will they change the story and ignore some facts as they did before? For example, Seijya, who was introduced as a good being in Tenshi no Shippo and Saint Beast – The Descent, has not that much of a nice role in the drama CDs.

Other Saint Beast related products: There are character song singles, chat CDs, parody drama CDs featuring the characters in weird situations, which part from the concept of “What would it be like if…?” (for example, what would it be like if the characters from Saint Beast were salary men, or students at the university, etc.) More recently the Saint Beast – Others CD series, featuring new characters from the universe of SB, came out.

There was also a manga that didn't run for long. Although the original design for the 2003 revamp of the characters is by Asagi Sakura, who also draws the postcards that come with the drama CDs, the manga is not drawn by her.

セイント・ビースト
Saint Beast
聖獣

Saint Beast - Manga

Saint Beast
Saint Beast
SPECIAL PRICE EDITION

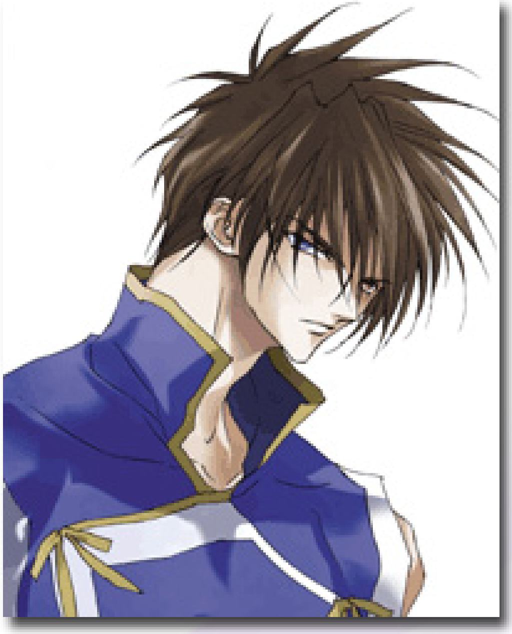
Saint Beast DVD (OVA) -
Ikusen no Hiru to Yoru Hen
(Special Price Edition)

Scanlation Group: Neko's Love

http://nekoslove.org/

Recently founded by Acchan and Kaoru Tao, Neko's Love Scanlations is a mexican page dedicated to the translation and edition of yaoi mangas and also a little of yuri, shojou and shonen.

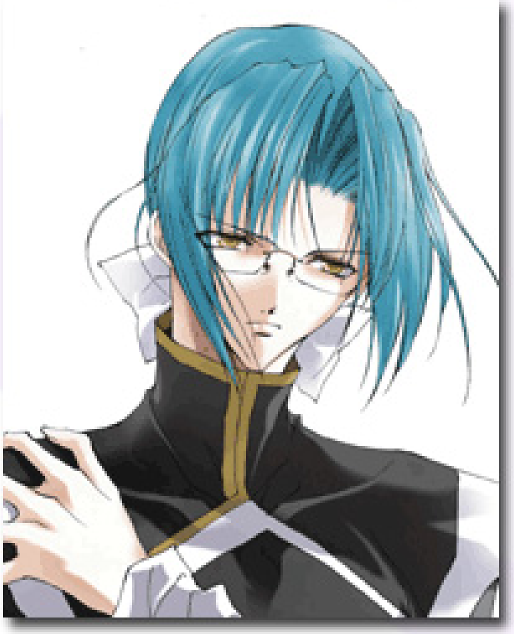
Characters



Goh

Apparent age: 22
Height: 185cm
Weight: 68kg
Voice: Morikawa Toshiyuki
(Conrad in Kyou Kara Maou!, Sephiroth in Final Fantasy)

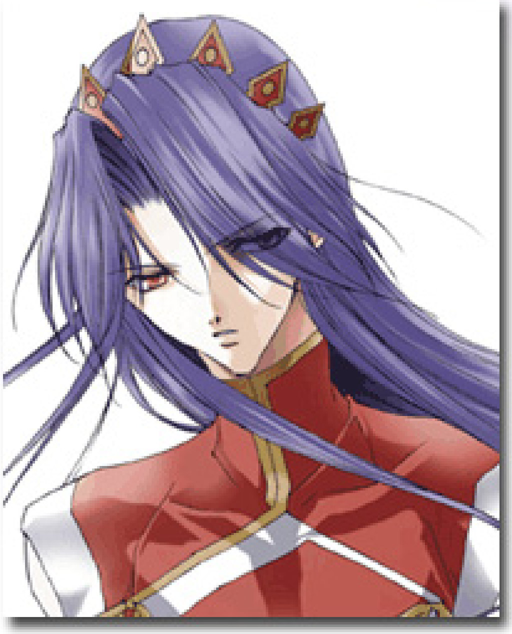
Strong and a good leader, he's the type who will say what he thinks even if it's not a very nice thing to say, but always wearing a gentle smile on his face. He's probably the most powerful along with Judas and Luca.



Shin

Apparent age: 21
Height: 177cm
Weight: 58kg
Voice: Sakurai Takahiro
(Orphe in Meine Liebe, Cloud in Final Fantasy)

He's quiet and loves to spend moments on his own, playing the harp. He doesn't like to stand out and can be naïve sometimes. He sticks to the rules and likes to follow the protocols.

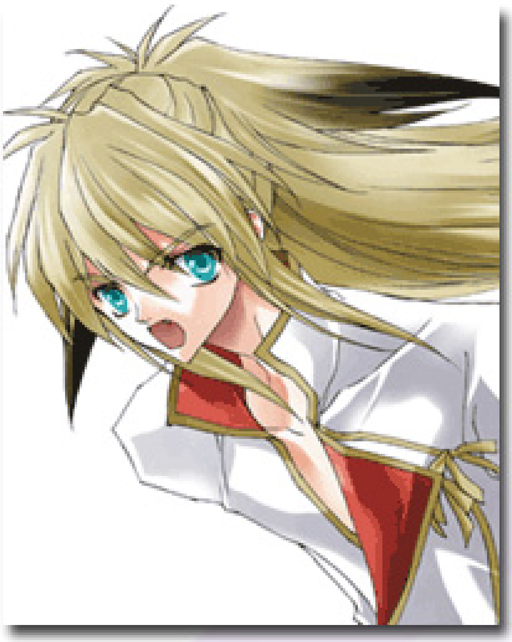


Rey

Apparent age: 20
Height: 178cm
Weight: 56kg
Voice: Miyata Kouki
(Kantarou in Tactics, Murata in Kyou Kara Maou!)

Gentle and soft-mannered, he always doubts his own abilities. He plays the role of a sort of mom to the others, always wanting to do the right thing and worrying about everything and everyone. He likes to cook. He has wings, just like Luca, whom he admires (and loves :P)

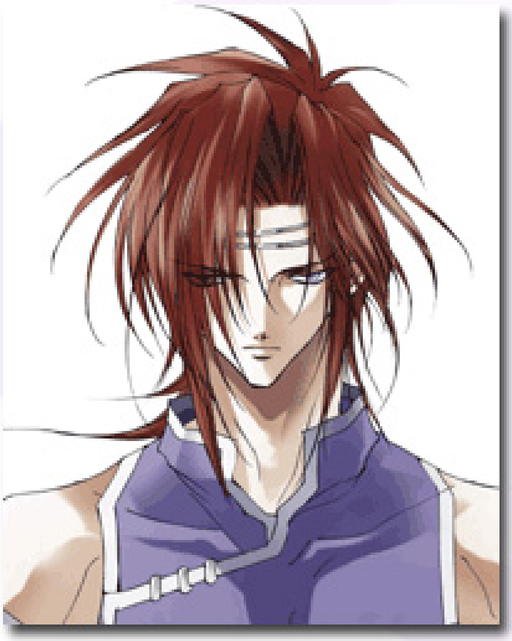
Characters



Gai

Apparent age: 19
Height: 170cm
Weight: 53kg
Voice: Yoshino Hiroyuki
(Youji in Loveless, Chrome in Cluster Edge, Zed in Kiba)

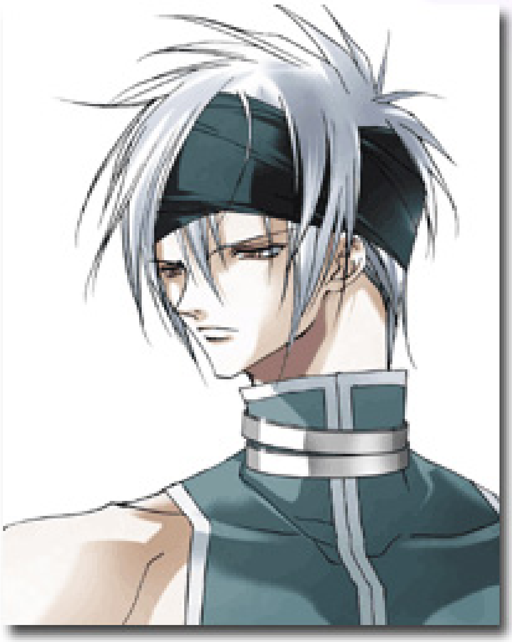
He's cheerful and childish, loves to play pranks. He's good friends with Maya. He can talk to felines.



Judas

Apparent age: 24
Height: 185cm
Weight: 66kg
Voice: Ishida Akira
(Hakkai in Saiyuki, Athrun in Gundam Seed)

He's a powerful angel loved and respected by everyone. Zeus gave him the ability to heal with his lips. Although he is kind to everybody, he is especially sweet to Shin. He has a strong sense of justice.



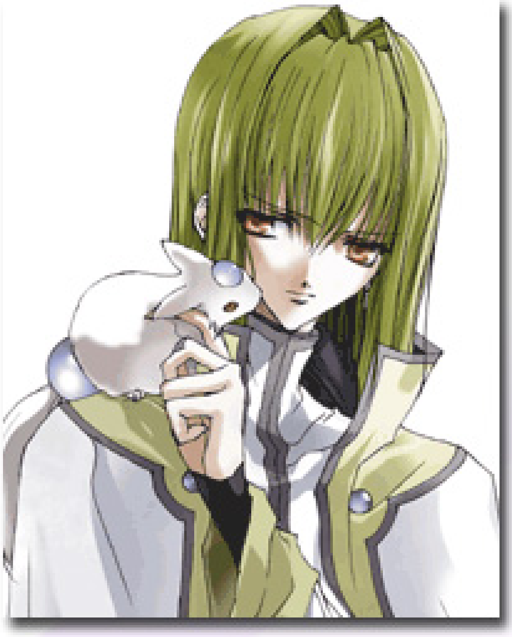
Luca

Apparent age: 23
Height: 180cm
Weight: 62kg
Voice: Midorikawa Hikaru
(Hiro in Gundam Wing, Tamahome in Fushigi Yuugi)

He has the power to read minds by touching the other person, and has wings, just like Rey. There is a mystery surrounding his origins. The answer to that mystery sets him apart the other angels and the clue to solve it is a mark he has on his forehead. He's very close to Rey and very good friends with Judas.

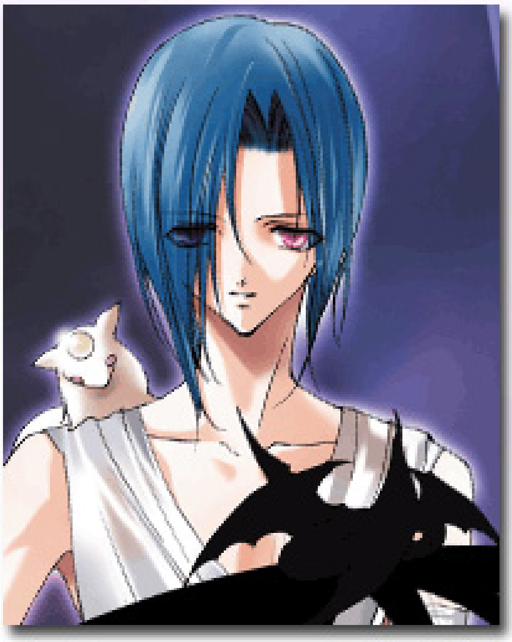
Characters

Pandora



Apparent age: 19
Height: 172cm
Weight: 49kg
Voice: Fukuyama Jun
(Lelouch in Code Geass, Watanuki in xxxHoLiC)

Zeus' Head Priest, he seems to like to manipulate people and to be in a position of power. The bunny-like being he carries on his shoulder is Pearl, which was created by Zeus from Pandora's body and even if they are apart they can feel what's happening to the other one. If one of them is suffering the other one feels the pain, if one of them dies the other one dies too. Because of this, retaining Pearl is a very good way to make sure Pandora will act just as he is ordered to (Pearl's voice: Suzuki Tatsuhisa, who sang the Sukisho opening theme).



Cassandra

Apparent age: 21
Height: 171cm
Weight: 53kg
Voice: Kaida Yuki
(Fuji in Prince of Tennis)

Another Priest, who is eager to be in a higher position and is waiting for the chance to take over Pandora's place as Head Priest.

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original slash yaoi fiction

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Saint Beast

Anime, Drama CD & Soundtracks etc.

Saint Beast
Drama CD 悠久の章 -楽園喪失- 1

Drama CD:
Saint Beast Yukyu no Sho -
Rakuen Soshitu Vol.1

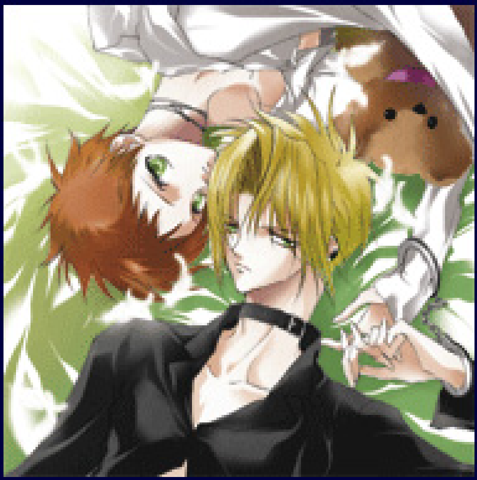
Saint Beast
Drama CD 悠久の章 -楽園喪失- 2

Drama CD:
Saint Beast Yukyu no Sho -
Rakuen Soshitu Vol.2

Saint Beast
Drama CD 悠久の章 -楽園喪失- 3

Drama CD:
Saint Beast Yukyu no Sho -
Rakuen Soshitu Vol.3

Saint Beast Coupling CD series #3



Drama CDs:
Saint Beast Coupling CD series #1
Shin X Shiva

Saint Beast Coupling CD series #2
Goh X Gai

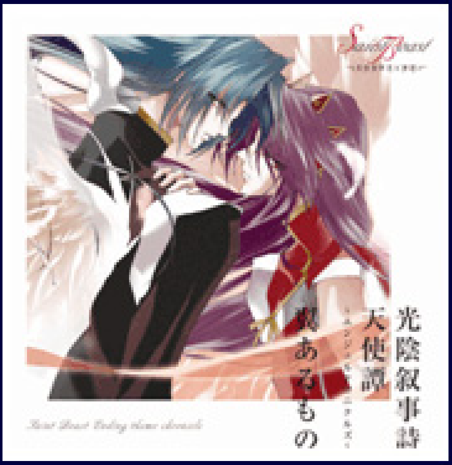
Saint Beast Coupling CD series #3
Pandora X Pearl

Saint Beast Coupling CD series #4
Luca X Rey

Saint Beast Coupling CD series #5
Kira X Maya

Anime, Drama CD & Soundtracks etc.

Saint Beast - Kouin Jojishi Tenshitan OP Theme
Divine love
JAM Project feat.Hiroshi Kitadani



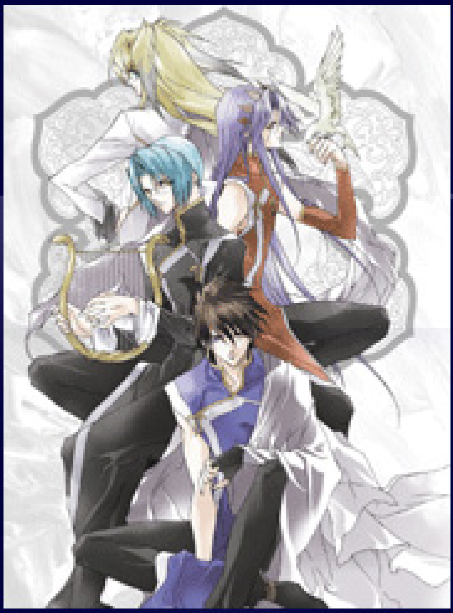
Saint Beast - Kouin Jojishi Tenshitan ED Theme 1
Kouin Jojishi Tenshitan Angel Chronicles

Saint Beast - Kouin Jojishi Tenshitan ED Theme 2
Retsu Go Guy!

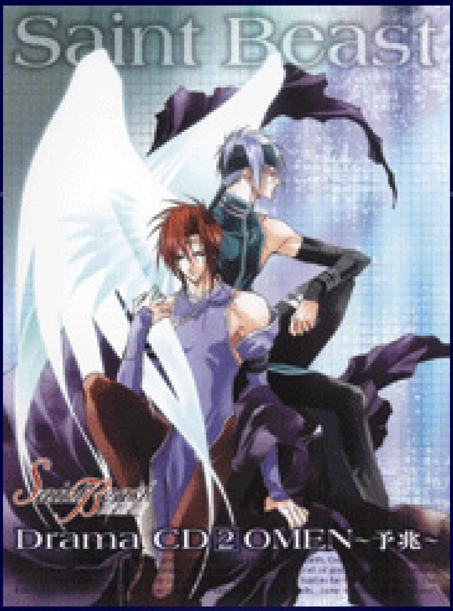
Anime DVD:
Saint Beast -
Seiju Kunrin Hen
(Special Package)

Anime DVD:
Saint Beast -
Kouin Jojishi Tenshita

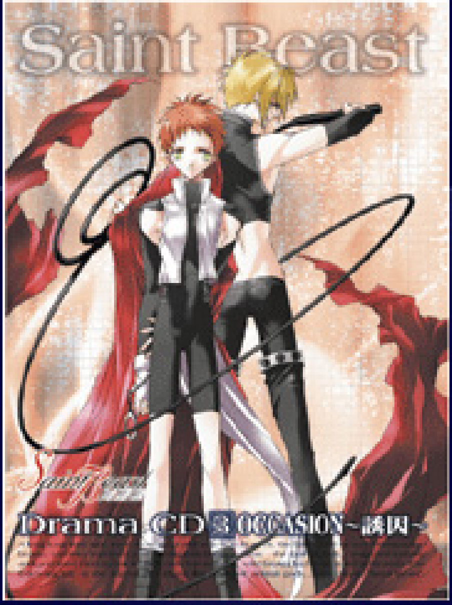
Fandisc:
Saint Beast -
Seiju Korin Hen



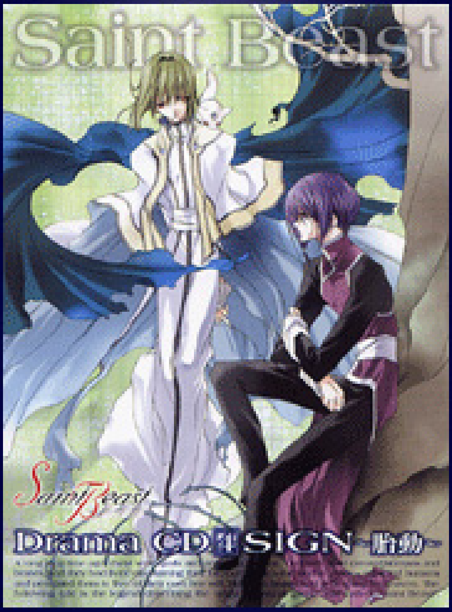
Saint Beast Vol.1
"ORIGIN"


Saint Beast
Drama CD 2 OMEN~予兆~

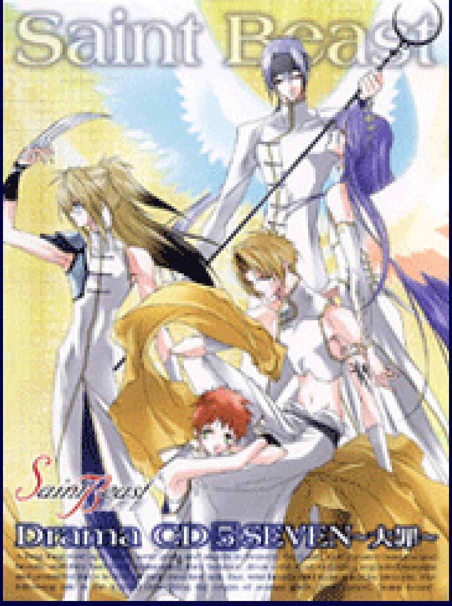
Saint Beast Vol.2
"OMEN"


Saint Beast
Drama CD 3 OCCASION~誘因~

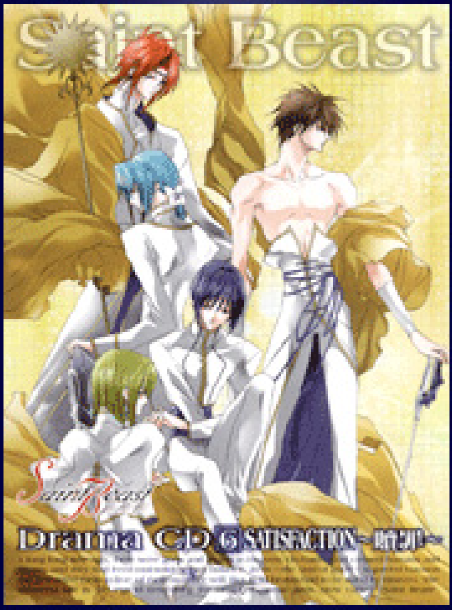
Saint Beast Vol.3
"OCCASION"


Saint Beast
Drama CD 4 SIGN~胎動~

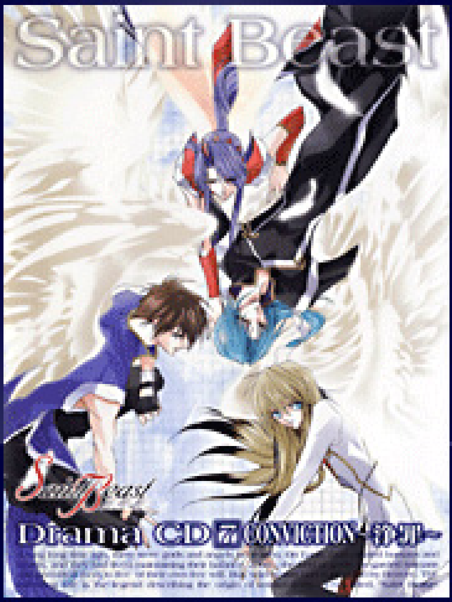
Saint Beast Vol.4
"SIGN"


Saint Beast
Drama CD 5 SEVEN~大罪~

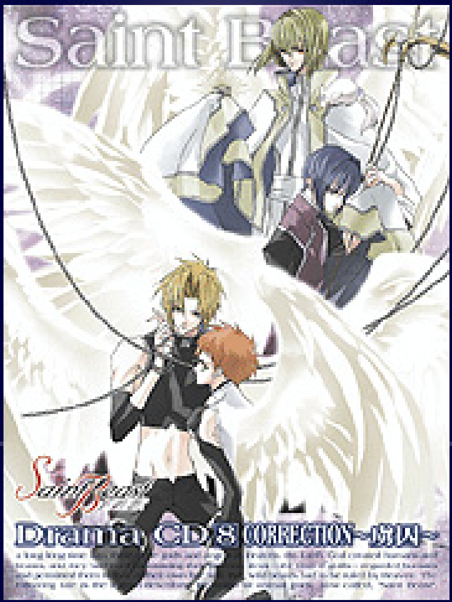
Saint Beast Vol.5
"SEVEN"


Saint Beast
Drama CD 6 SATISFACTION

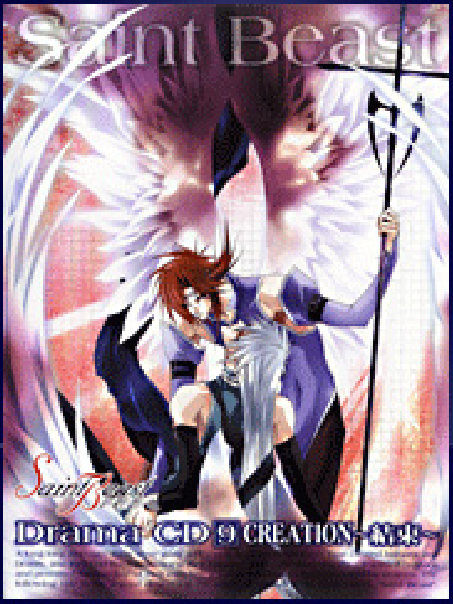
Saint Beast Vol.6
"SATISFACTION"


Saint Beast
Drama CD 7 CONVICTION

Saint Beast Vol.7
"CONVICTION"


Saint Beast
Drama CD 8 CORRECTION

Saint Beast Vol.8
"CORRECTION"


Saint Beast
Drama CD 9 CREATION

Saint Beast Vol.9
"CREATION"

Saint Beast

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Saint Beast Postcard Scans by Blaqueluna @ aarinfantasy forum

Saint Beast

aarinsecret.com

Written by Aarin ; Edited by: Miko

Seiyuu: Takahiro Sakurai 櫻井孝宏

Profile

Date of Birth: 13 June 1974
Birthplace: Aichi Prefecture
Hobby/Special skill: Music appreciation, stroll, track and field
Member of 81 Produce

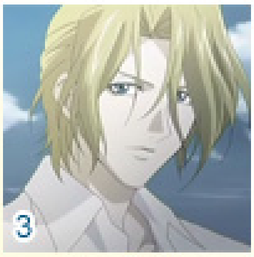
You have watched all those animes and wondered why some characters sounded the same in different animes. Not everyone knows about the voices behind those characters. In this article, we feature a prolific seiyuu or voice actor - Takahiro Sakurai. Don't know him? He's most famously known as the guy who voiced Cloud of Final Fantasy VII Advent Children.

Takahiro Sakurai is well-known for his flexibility in giving voice to various types of characters. He can be really serious as Cloud (FF7AC) or funny, like Yuri Shibuya (Kyou Kara Mao!). One very obvious thing, especially to his fans, is that he usually gets to voice handsome and charming characters. I think Endo Kazuki (Gakuen Heaven) and Orpherus (Meine Liebe) can be counted among these successes. Besides voicing for animes, he also voiced for games, drama CDs and has even sung for some anime theme songs!

Takahiro Sakurai had some troubles around October 2006 due to some issues related to plagiarism. Fans were devastated at the rumors that he would not be voicing anymore for a long time. Thank goodness Takahiro's problem was solved quickly and he continues to voice roles, to his fans' delight. Besides Japan, he has quite a large worldwide fan base. I am sure everyone is happy that this seiyuu will stick around for a very long time.

Some of the main roles he voiced for:

1 Black Blood Brothers (TV) as Mochizuki Jirou
Black Cat (TV) as Jenos Hazard
Code Geass (TV) as Suzaku Kururugi
D.Gray-man (TV) as Yu Kanda
Final Fantasy VII (movie) as Cloud Strife
2 Gakuen Heaven (TV) as Kazuki Endo
Gate Keepers (TV) as Shun Ukiya
3 Meine Liebe Wieder (TV) as Orpherus
GunxSword (TV) as Ray Langlen
Innocent Venus (TV) as Jin Tsurasawa
Kaikan Phrase (TV) as Santa
4 Kyou Kara Mao! (TV) as Yuri Shibuya
Pretear (TV) as Sasame
5 Saint Beast (TV) as Genbu no Shin
Vie Durant (OVA) as Di
Zombie-Loan (TV) as Shito Tachibana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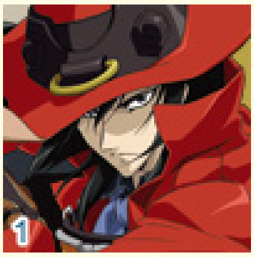
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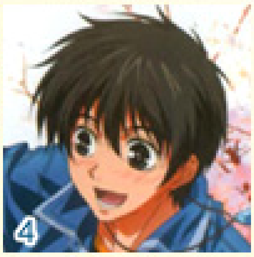
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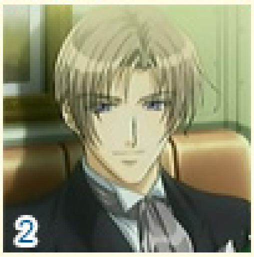
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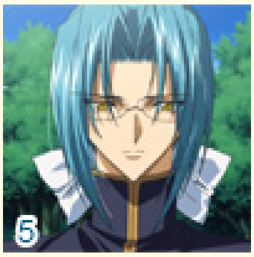

5

For the complete list of Takahiro Sakurai's role, check this site:
http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/encyclopedia/people.php?id=5039

Reviews

New or old animes? We don't care!
Let's review those yaoi goodies!

Special thanks to all forumers who submitted their reviews:
greyhakuro, Demeter, Neko Kaoru, Chibati, kitsune16, neslax, orangewillow, yayuki, Lapis-chan, MasterFranny, soubisan, BDElf, tri_cobalt, ding 1989, yng_tr

>> Ratings:

5	**Amazing!**
4	**Good**
3	**Average**
2	**Bad**
1	**Skip this**

Next page >>

Gakuen Heaven

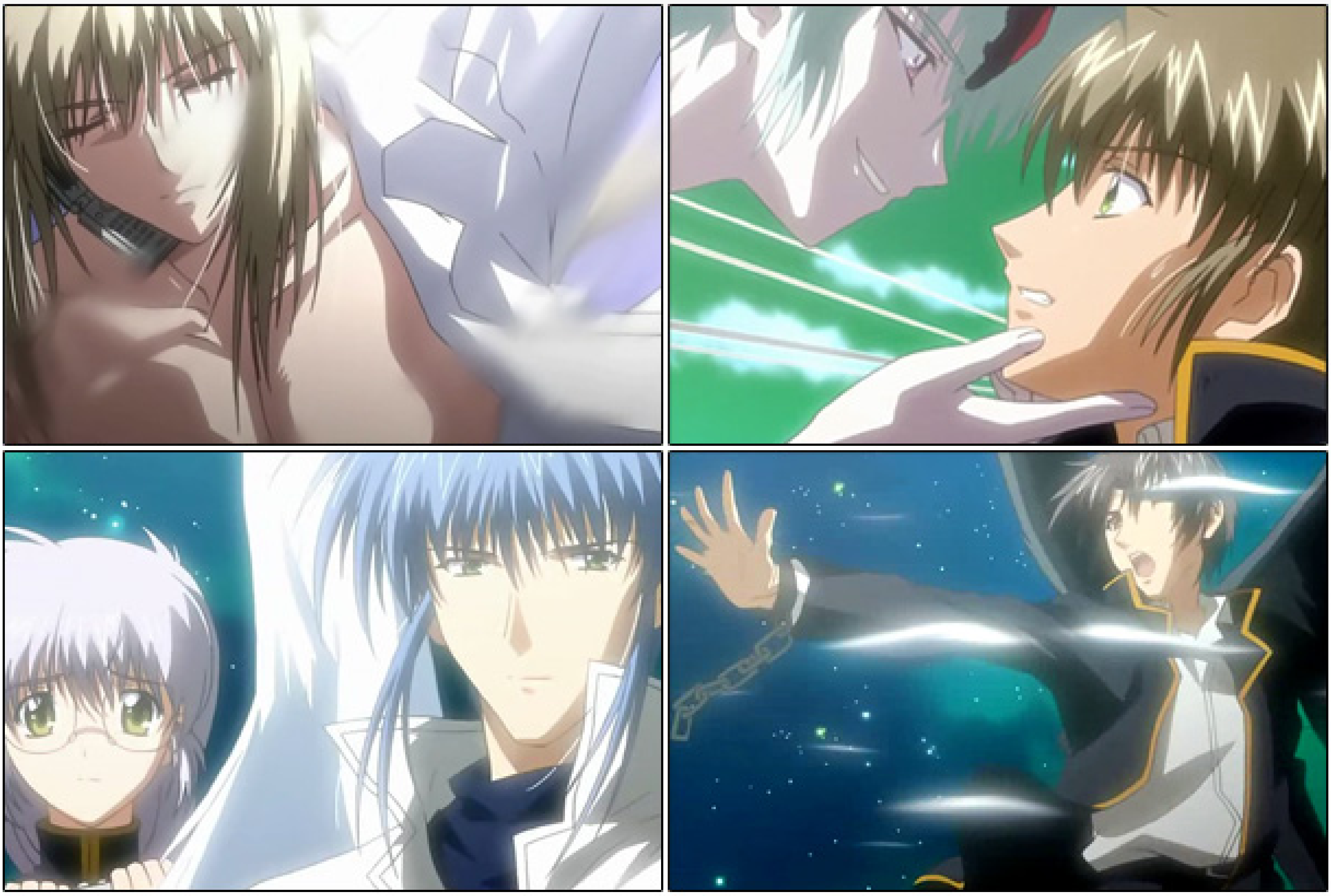
Chibati: Although this series specializes in providing only hints of BL, it's still easy to see the relationships between the characters as more than that of classmates or friends, even though due to the huge cast, these are not dealt with in detail. The series is very easy on both the eyes and ears, containing a stellar voice cast, and the animation style remains distinctive to the original game, clear and bright, although lacking the gratuitous sex scenes. If you're looking for a funny, shallow series full of prettiness, in which you can snicker at the jokes and cheer for pairings - multiple and many, though the series makes clear it has it's own OTP - but don't wish having to fear house mates barging in at unfortunate moments, this is the series for you!

MasterFranny: Story and life of a bunch of school boys trying to get into the pants of the main character, Keita. I've watched the anime even though I didn't play the game yet, but I can say that it could have stayed as well in the game department without trying to become a must-see. The plot lacks of conviction and interesting parts, it's kind of dull, clichéed until boredom, and filled with those mushy mushy parts that make you blush and stutter like a fangirl. Those can be good, but looking from the outside, you can see that the cute and sparkly scenes are just there to hide the uselessness of the series. As a game the plot can be interesting and likeable, but as an anime it's only one of many. The character development is also lacking, since they are predictable and enough stereotyped to be utterly fake. The art is quite good, but it's not the strong point of the anime either.

kitsune16: Introducing all the characters from the game, this anime series is about the life of a boy named Keita at a special school. The artwork is very true to the game, and the seiyuu + music was good, but the storyline overall was disappointing. The original manga storyline, in my opinion, was much better, and I feel that this series was heavily overrated.

Chibati	MasterFranny	kitsune16
4	2	2

The Good: Lovely artwork & eye candy!
The Bad: It get's dull



Angel's Feather

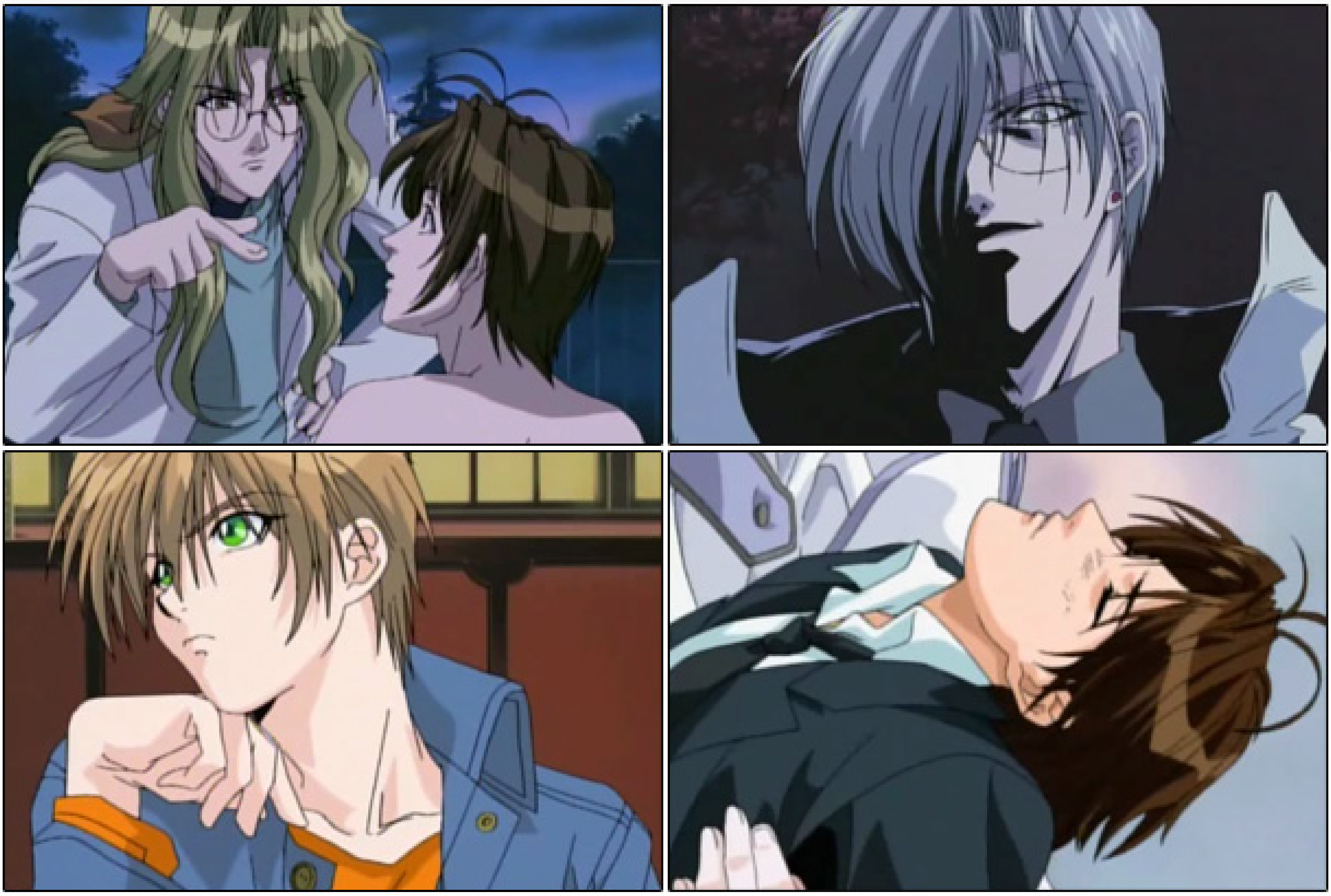
orangewillow: I found "Angel's Feather" to be beautifully animated. Unfortunately the story line is confusing, the characters seem almost interchangeable. After viewing it several times, I was finally able to follow the story line and distinguish between the characters. The second OVA does help with clearing up some of the confusion caused by the first OVA. Overall I would recommend this series of OVAs to people looking for eye candy and those who don't mind being confused by what they just watched.

tri_cobalt: A two episode OVA based on the game of the same name. Estranged twins are reunited and a mysterious kingdom is threatened.
This OVA was a letdown - pure and simple. There was so much potential, not only in the amazing character designs, but also in the main premise of the twins destiny tied to that of the magical kingdom. The animation was of a good quality, but the storyline jumped erratically from scene to scene, with little or no explanation as to what was happening. Perhaps only something that can be truly appreciated by someone who has played the game.

ding 1989: A war/fight between the white-winged angels and black-winged angels started long ago in Winfield. This war was soon to be revived when Shou Homura transferred to a private boys' school where he thought he found his long lost brother Kai. This two episode/OAV anime was a cliff-hanger for me. It just gives a person an unfinished storyline. I haven't played the game yet so I can't compare it to the game. I also felt that a possibly good storyline was compressed into a short time. Not really a must watch.

orangewillow	tri_cobalt	ding 1989
3	1	3

The Good: Nice character design
The Bad: Confusing storyline



Yami no Matsuei

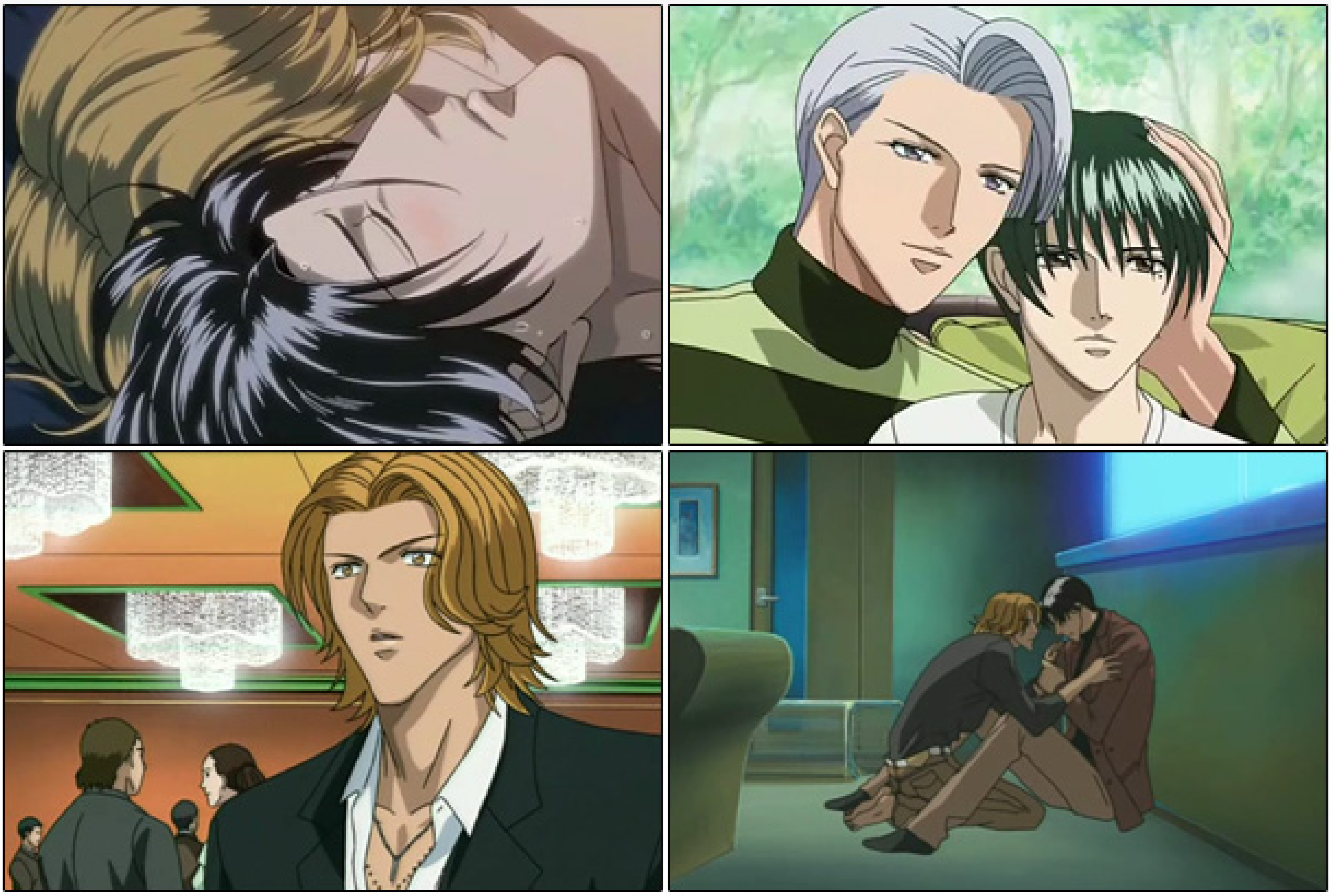
Demeter: The investigations of a pair of shinigami, employees of the world of the dead, to find the souls who got lost on the way. Incredible but true, I found the anime even better than the manga. The adaptation and animation are perfect, the voice actors are incredible. The plot is really interesting and the characters are just too adorable and/or beautiful. A must not only for BL fans, but for all anime lovers.

Chibati: Although there are a few clichés in this series, the main characters are likeable, unique and interesting. The main villain, Muraki is exciting with the way he pursues Tsuzuki, and it is heart warming to watch the growing relationship between Tsuzuki and his new partner Hisoka. The story line remains interesting although the beginning can take a while to pick up the pace and later on in the series the angst does tend to walk the fine line between being overwhelming and keeping you hooked to the edge of your seat - eager to find out what happens next.

ding 1989: A Shinigami's work is to lead the dead to where they are supposed to go. Asato Tsuzuki and Hisoka Kurosaki are partners with contradicting personalities, but they would help and support each other against Dr. Muraki. In my opinion, this is one of the must-see BL/yaoi anime. The plot is really one of a kind and the love-hate "partnership" between Tsuzuki and Hisoka is well-developed. I wasn't really satisfied with the ending though. I hope they'd release a sequel.

Demeter	Chibati	ding 1989
5	3.5	4

The Good: Excellent storyline, great characters, wonderful soundtrack... Do we need to say more?
The Bad: 13 episodes are too short



Haru wo Daiteita

Demeter: The love relationship between 2 former AV actors who try to succeed as «real» actors. The major good point is the voice actors, they are quite impressive. Apart from that... I was quite disappointed. The sexiness of Youka Nitta's drawings has disappeared, the sex scenes are uninteresting, and really how can you expect a good storyline when one manga is summed up in thirty minutes? Even the animation didn't convince me. My advice: read the manga!!!

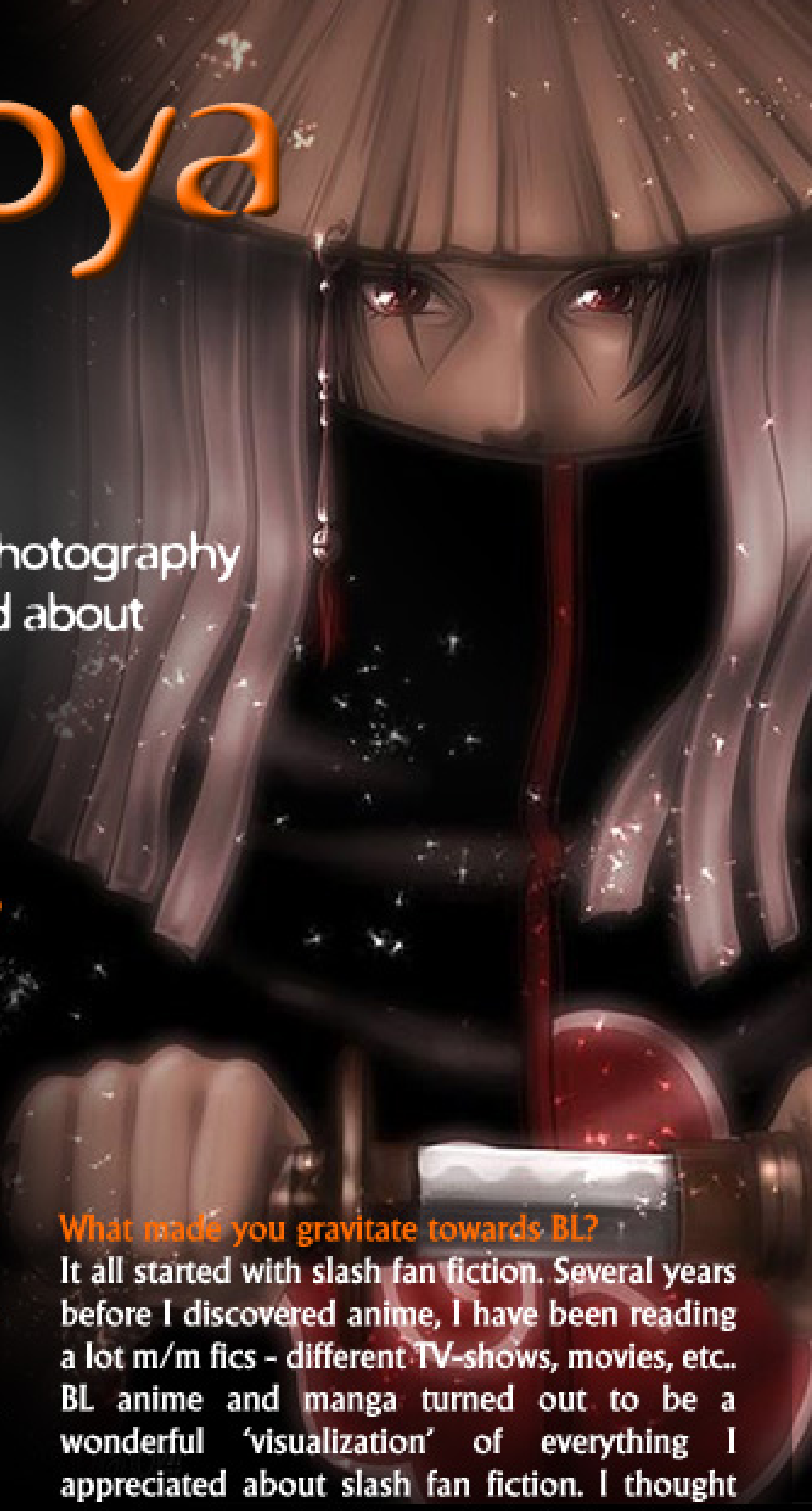
MasterFranny: All in all an interesting anime, staying close to the manga, but mostly it feels too lacking in the plot department. The characters are well developed though, even if the animated version feels kind of rushed. It gets repetitive after a while, with all the tension and angstying of the protagonists - it feels like watching a tennis match, and even the high-rated parts get boring (in the manga too). The art style is good, sometimes a bit angular but good, and I love the shading, but I suggest to watch the title only if you're a fan of the mangaka or if you're in need of some good smut.

BDElf: The love story between Iwaki and Katou, two actors who both have a past in the adult movie industry, is remarkably compelling. Even when competing for the same part, or when Katou's co-star tries to end their relationship, their feelings for each other are too strong to be swayed by outside influences. The artwork is gorgeous, in my opinion, and although the choice of who is seme surprised me, I wholeheartedly recommend this anime.

Demeter	MasterFranny	BDElf
2	3	5

The Good: Interesting characters and plot developments
The Bad: Animation not up to expectation

Yanagoya



Age: 21
Gender: Female
Place of Origin: Russia, Tver
Hobbies: Horses, Drawing & Photography
Language: Russian, English and about a hundred Japanese words

If you are a Naruto BL fan, chances are you've already seen her artwork, but do you know she also draws other fanarts and her very own original creations? Young and passionate artist Yanagoya tells us how she started it all...

Yana, at what age did you first begin drawing and what was it that got you started? Is it a natural talent you developed or did you study at an art school?

I began drawing when I was 10 years old. A childhood friend of mine introduced me to horses and horseback riding, and it became a very big part of my life. Horses inspired me to take up drawing. Of course, at the beginning it was merely a child drawing stick figures. It lasted, though. For the following 7 years the only thing I was drawing occasionally was horses. I didn't spend much time on it in general, so I couldn't even call it a hobby. I guess it's safe to say that I started drawing for real only in 2002, when I watched 'Gravitation' and anime ate my brain. Unfortunately, I never went to an art school. My parents took me to the musical school, which I graduated from, but I haven't studied art. Right now, I feel that this was one of the biggest omissions in my life.

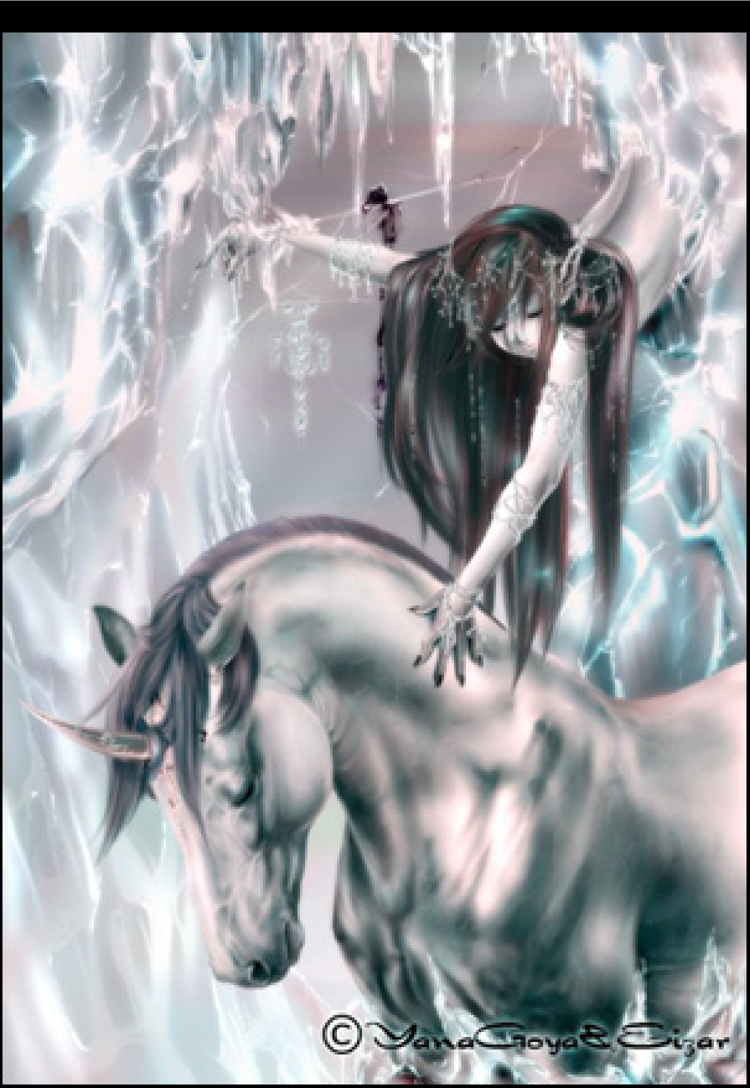
What made you gravitate towards BL?

It all started with slash fan fiction. Several years before I discovered anime, I have been reading a lot m/m fics - different TV-shows, movies, etc.. BL anime and manga turned out to be a wonderful 'visualization' of everything I appreciated about slash fan fiction. I thought about my love for BL and slash, trying to find the psychological base for this preference, but in the end I figured - simply, the explanation isn't required. It's hot, exciting, sweet and touching... the best entertainment out there.

What inspires you to draw BL?

It's self-inspired. I deeply love anime styled digital art, and drawing itself is a process I enjoy to no end. The subject only adds. Plus, with all the drawbacks of anime being a product of a foreign culture, it certainly gives a new perspective on a lot of things. And this is quite inspiring.

Yanagoya



Do you only draw BL? If not, what other subjects are represented in your art?

Naturally, I do not only draw BL. I draw everything I like - mostly horses, sometimes famous people and random anime characters. There are many things I want to draw, but don't have enough skills to do so yet.

Do your close friends and family/relatives know you draw BL art?

Yes, friends and family do know that I draw BL. Actually, anyone who comes to visit instantly knows that I draw BL - I have a lot of my drawings on my walls. My parents, being, you know - parents, are somewhat conservative and thus not exactly supportive, so I refrain from shoving my 'new NC-17 ItaSasu pic' in their faces; but in general they are well aware of the subject I stick to. Many - if not all - of my friends like BL as much as I do, so it's not an issue at all. Only when it comes to protecting my walls from fangirls.

Is this just a hobby or are you doing this as a profession?

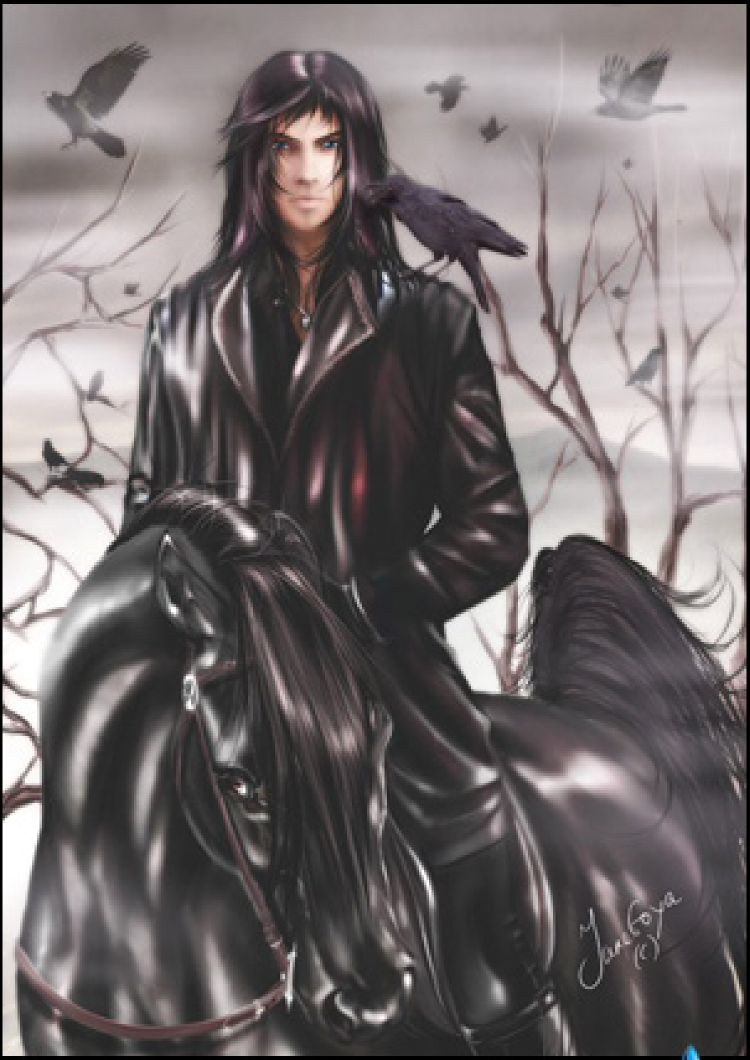
As a matter of fact, I'm a linguist; I've just graduated from the university. But I'm not interested in this occupation, and I'm going to pursue art from now on.

Your artworks have characters with so many amazing poses. Do you use models?

Sometimes. But I rarely have a clear image of what I want to draw in mind, so the pose, as well as the whole picture just 'draws itself'. I just hold the pen.

Do you have anyone that you look up to when it comes to art?

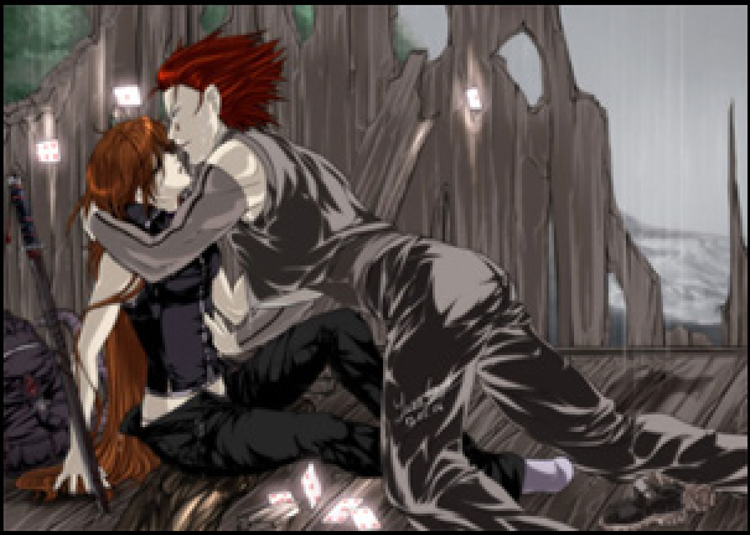
Ooooh yes. There are so many artists I adore. Seriously too many to enlist.
Atsuko NAKAJIMA (Getbackers, Trinity Blood) is my absolute favorite among anime character designers. Her art took my breath away and perhaps influenced my style greatly. Naono Boura is my favorite yaoi mangaka. She's got an amazing art and wonderful story lines.

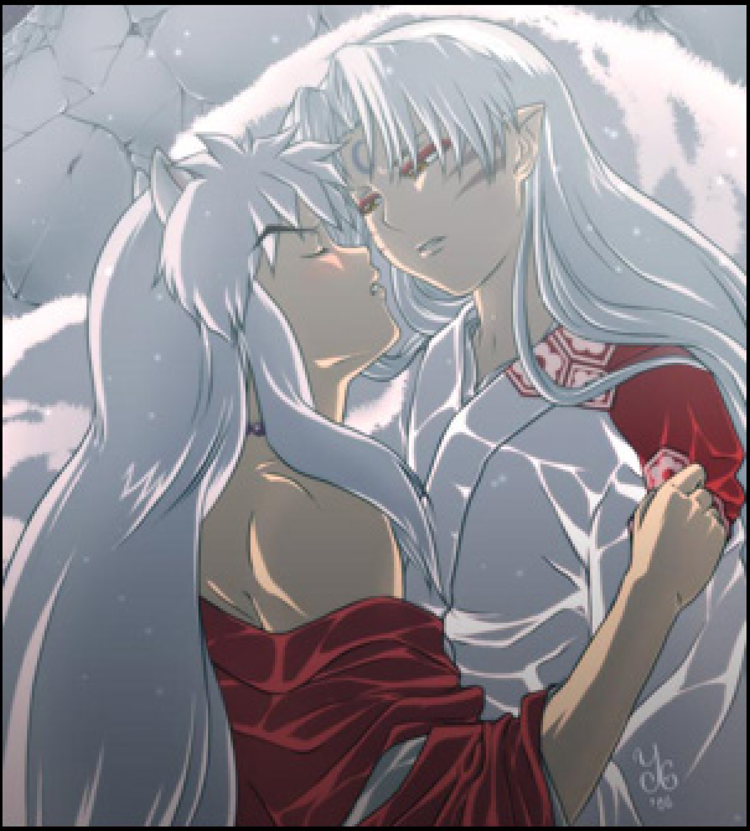


Yanagoya

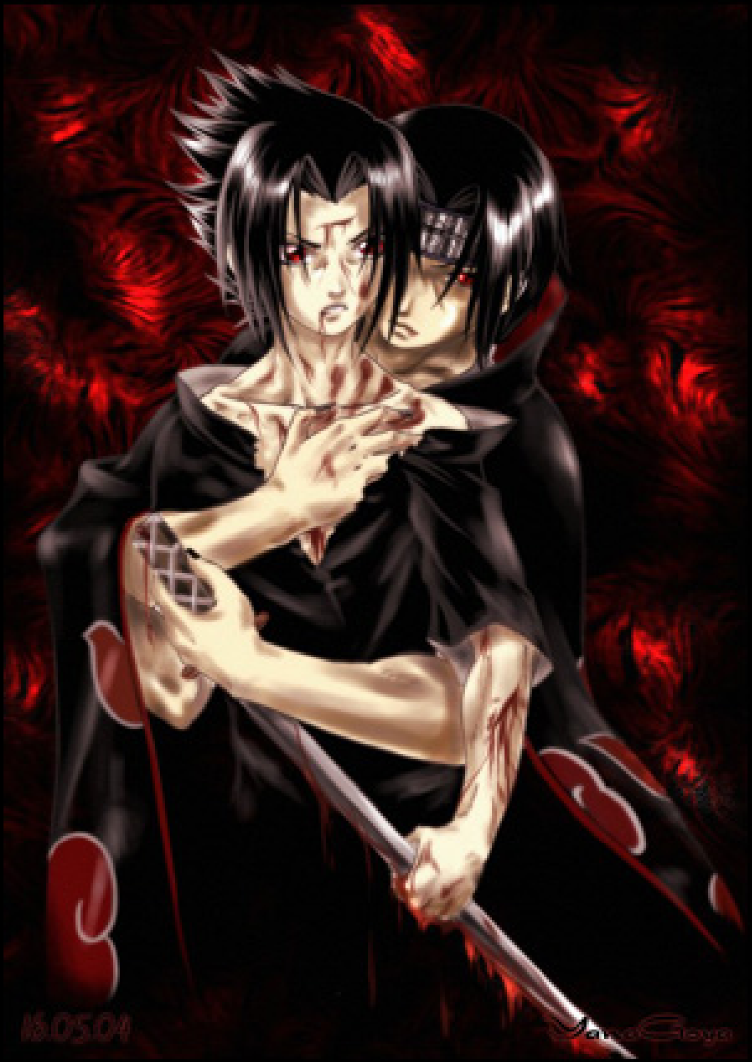
Which of your works is or are your favorite(s)?

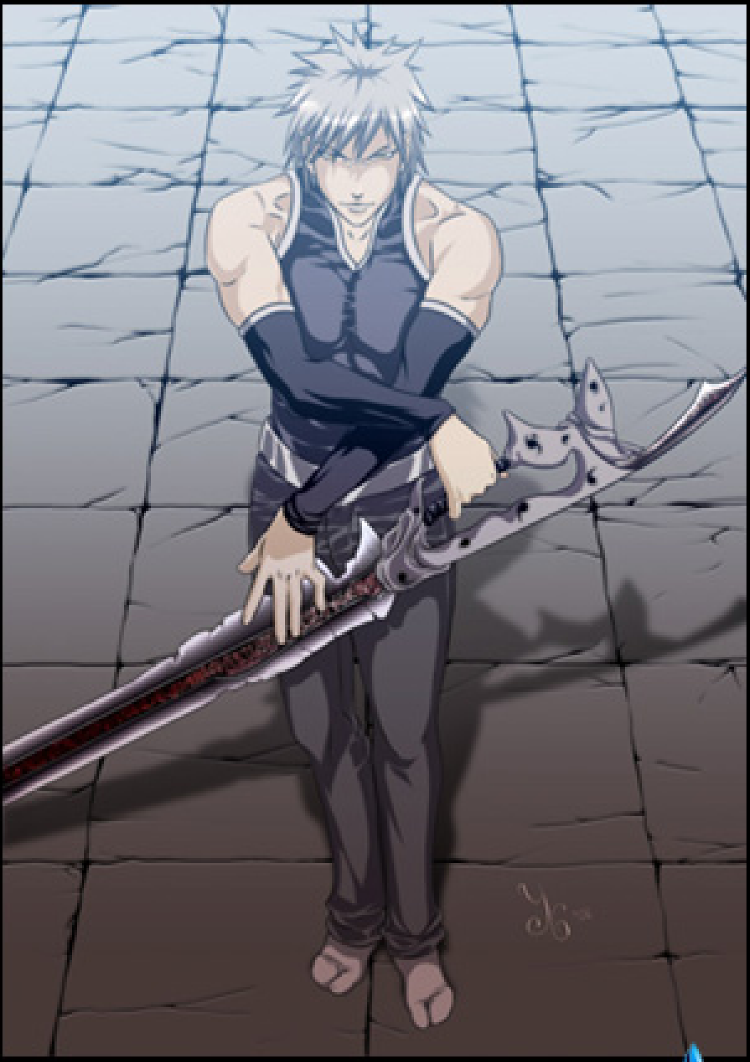
Usually, the images I like best are not the most popular among other people. These are my favorite ones:





Top left: This is kinda a Mary Sue image, which wasn't planned, but happened on its own.
Top right: My favorite fanart
Bottom right: My favorite original character pic
Bottom left: Of all my early art I like this one the most





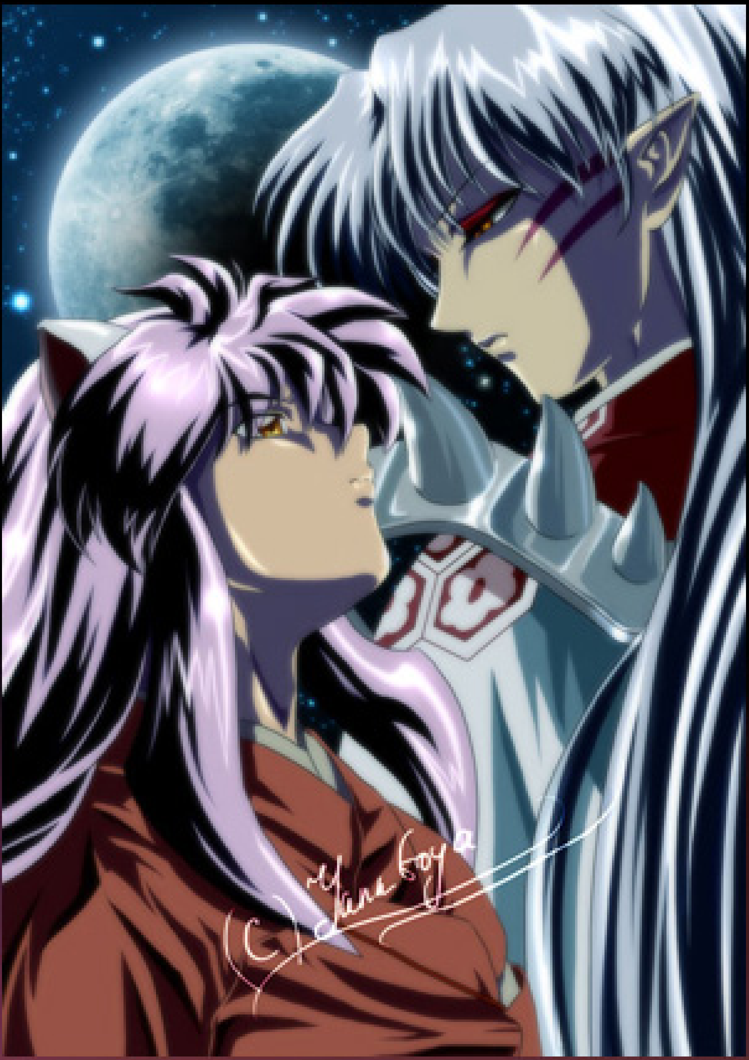
Yanagoya

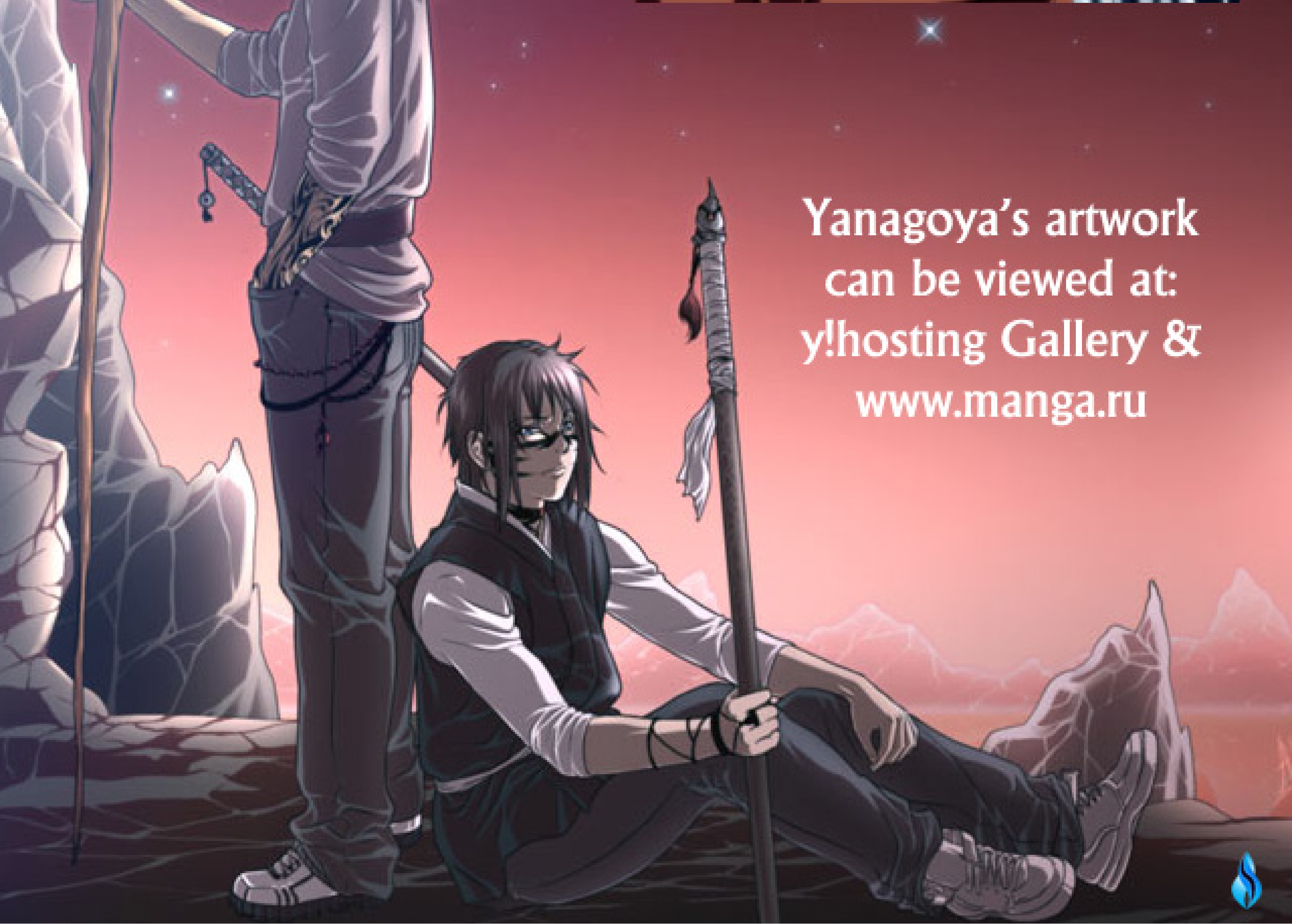
What form of media do you use for your artwork?

I'm a hardcore fan of digital art - so it's tablet with Photoshop, OpenCanvas and sometimes Painter. I'm helpless with traditional media.

Where do you think your art will lead you?

For starters, I'd like to study art. I'm far from becoming a professional and I want to broaden my 'art horizons' - I want to learn about 3D, about the game industry, animation... there are so many things I don't know about art yet. I want to study, I want to gain experience and eventually, perhaps, I'd like to run an art studio.

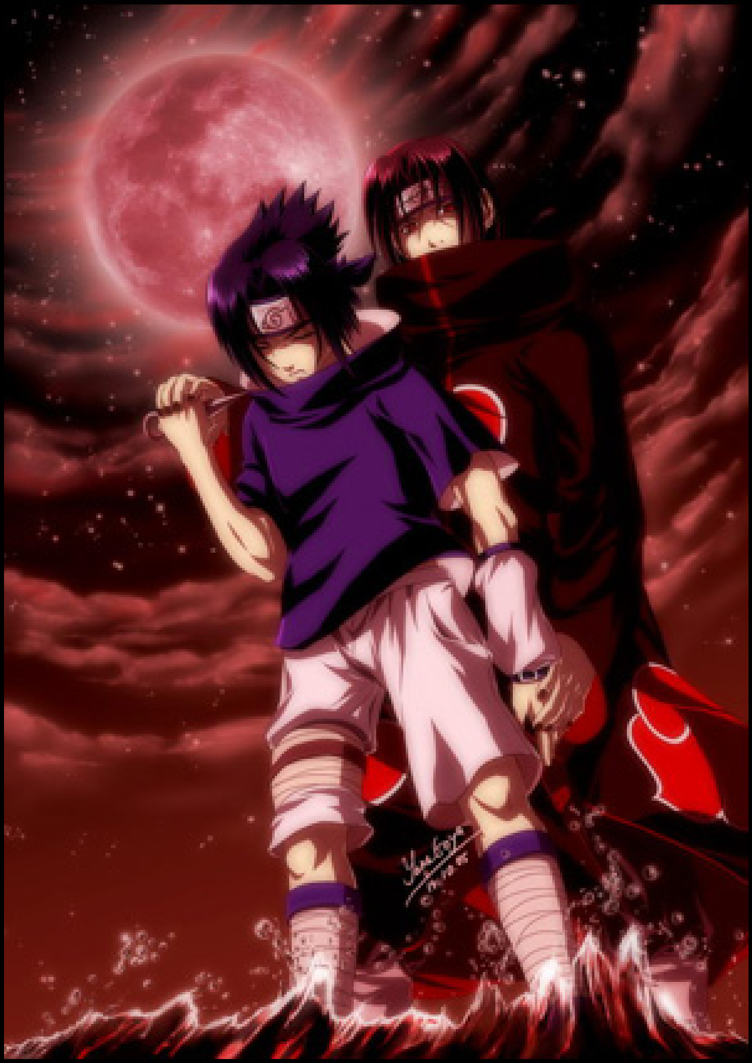


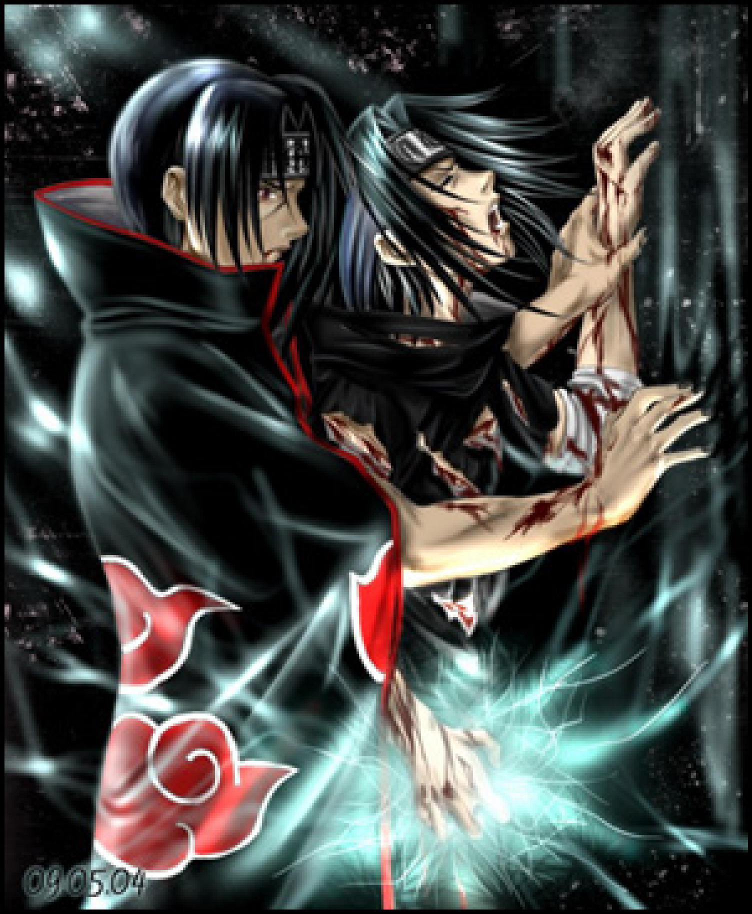


Yanagoya's artwork
can be viewed at:
y!hosting Gallery &
www.manga.ru

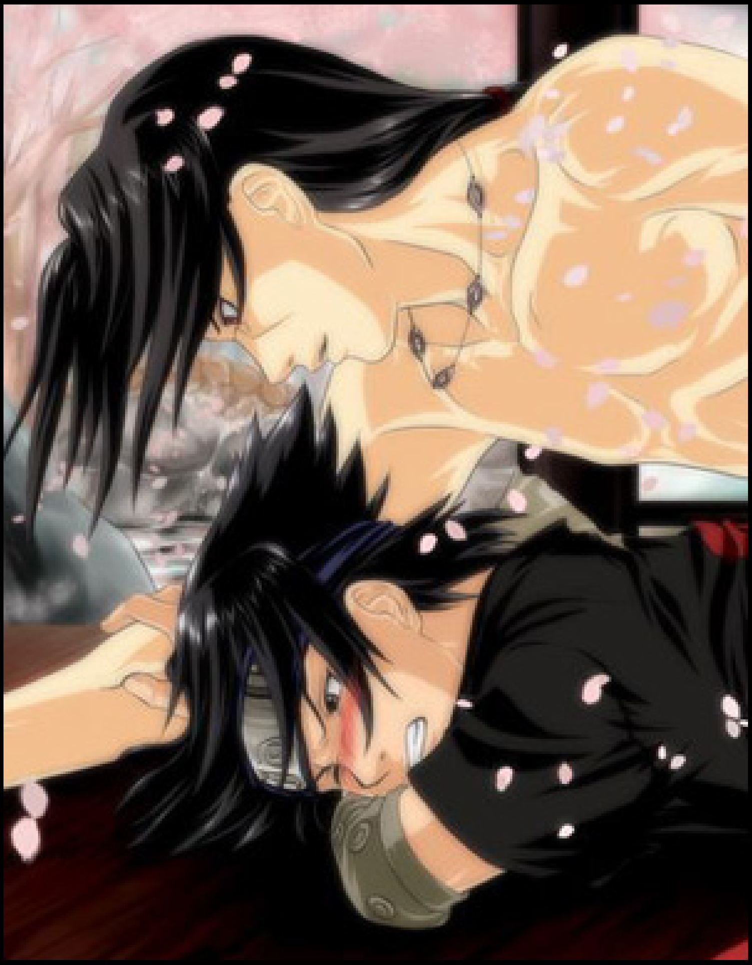
Yanagoya's fanart of the Uchiha brothers...

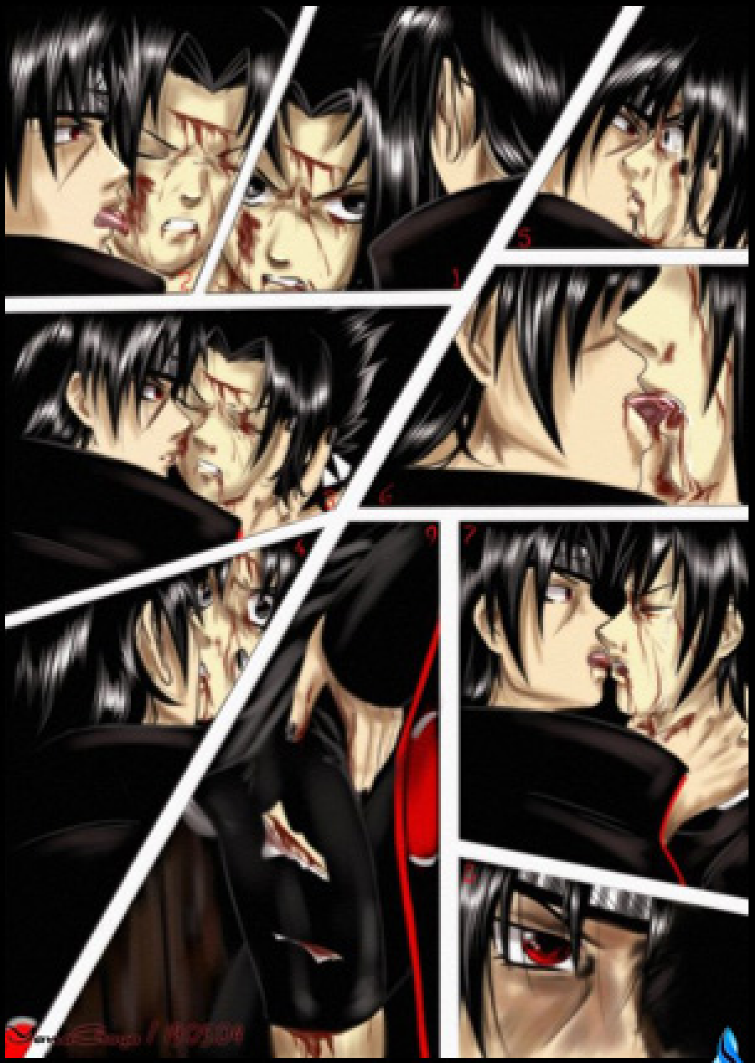
Yanagoya's fanart of the Uchiha brothers...



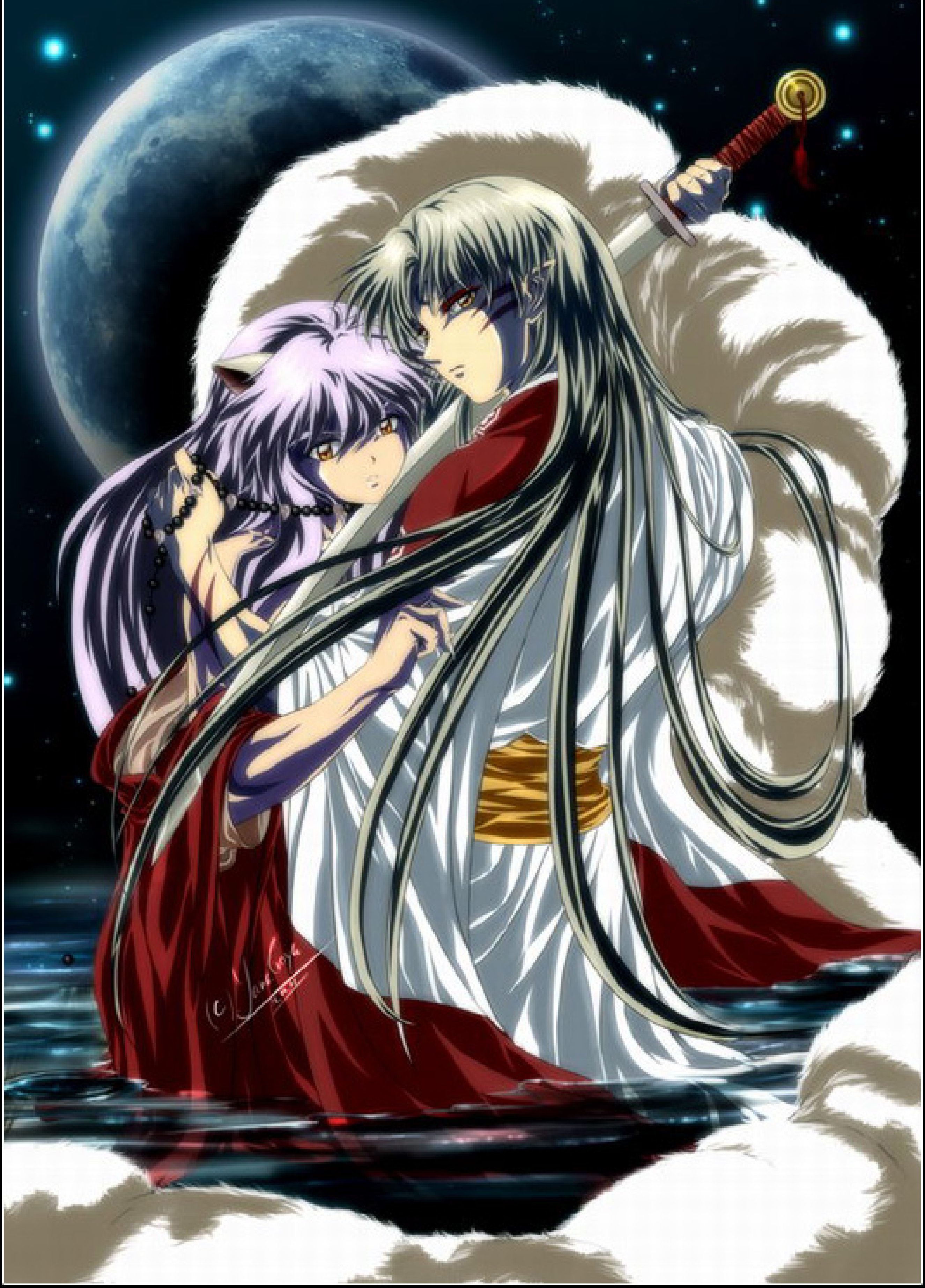


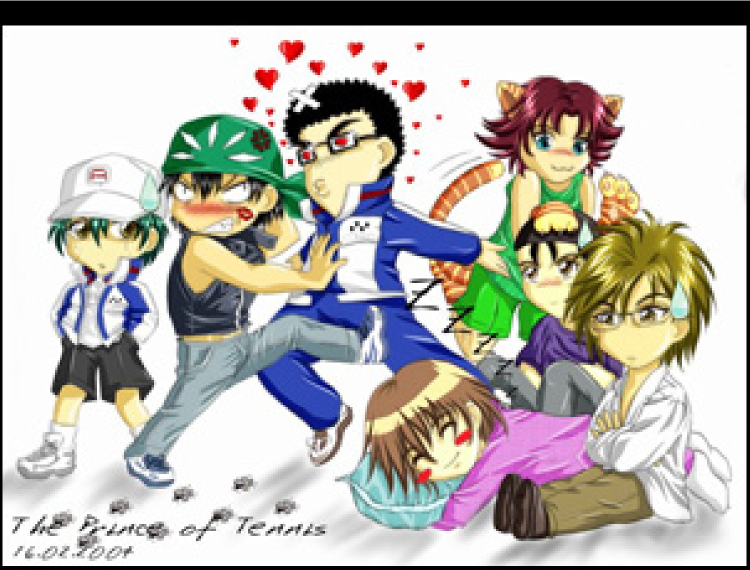
(c) Yanagoya

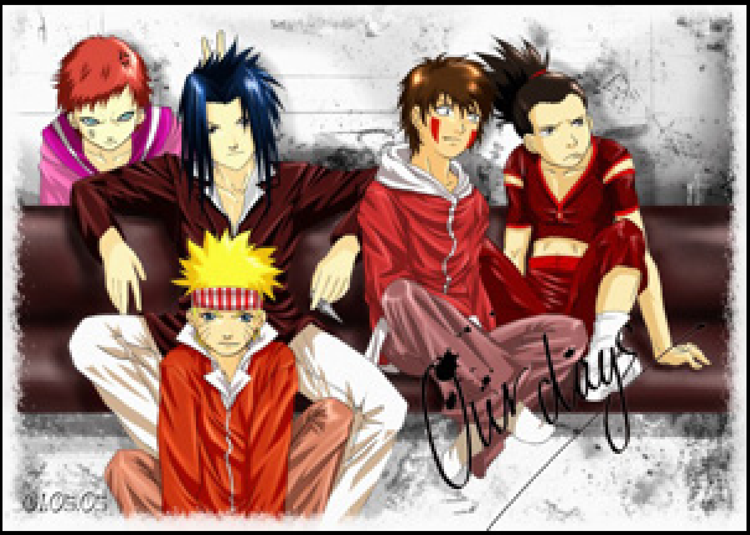


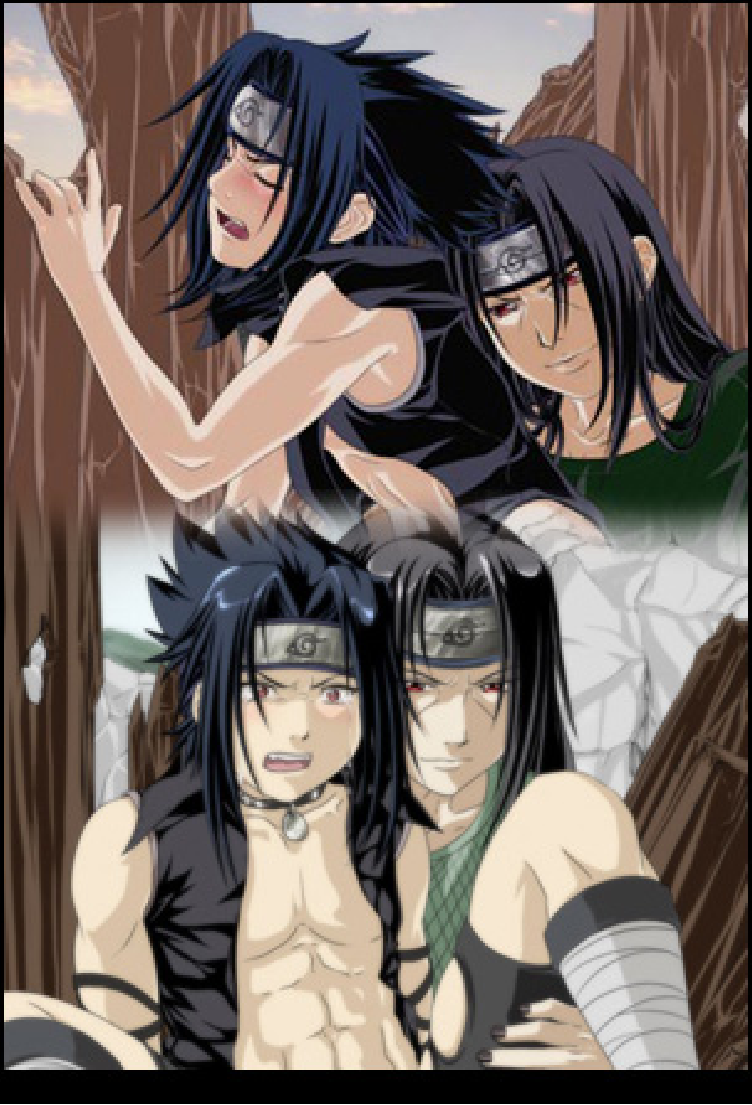


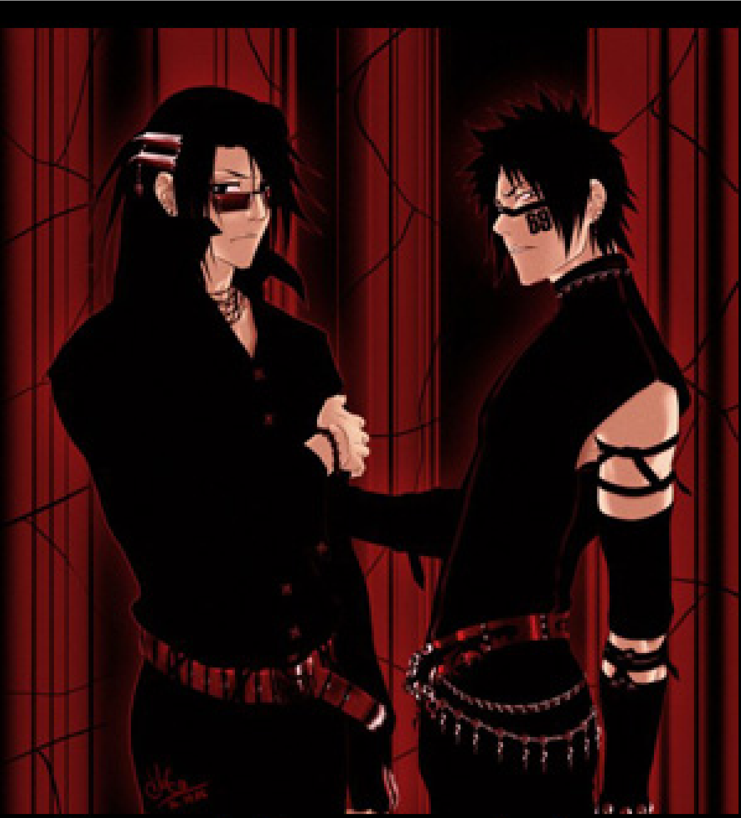
Yanagoya's fanart of Inuyasha...




The Prince of Tennis
16.02.2004


Our days
©1.05.05

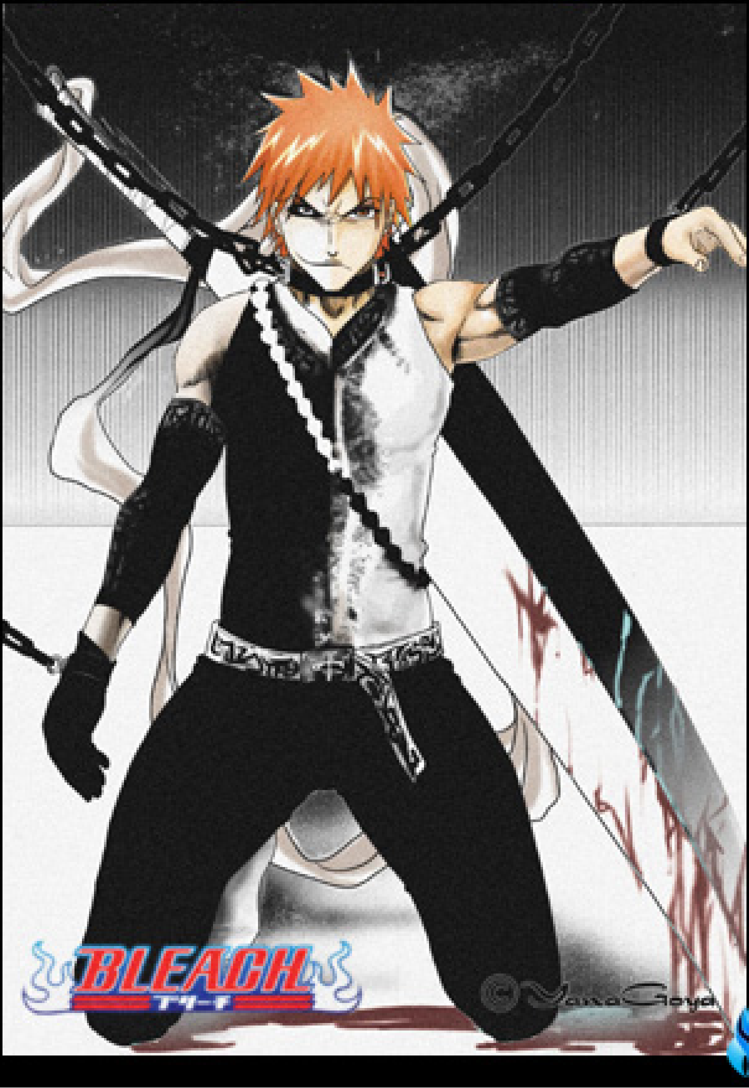


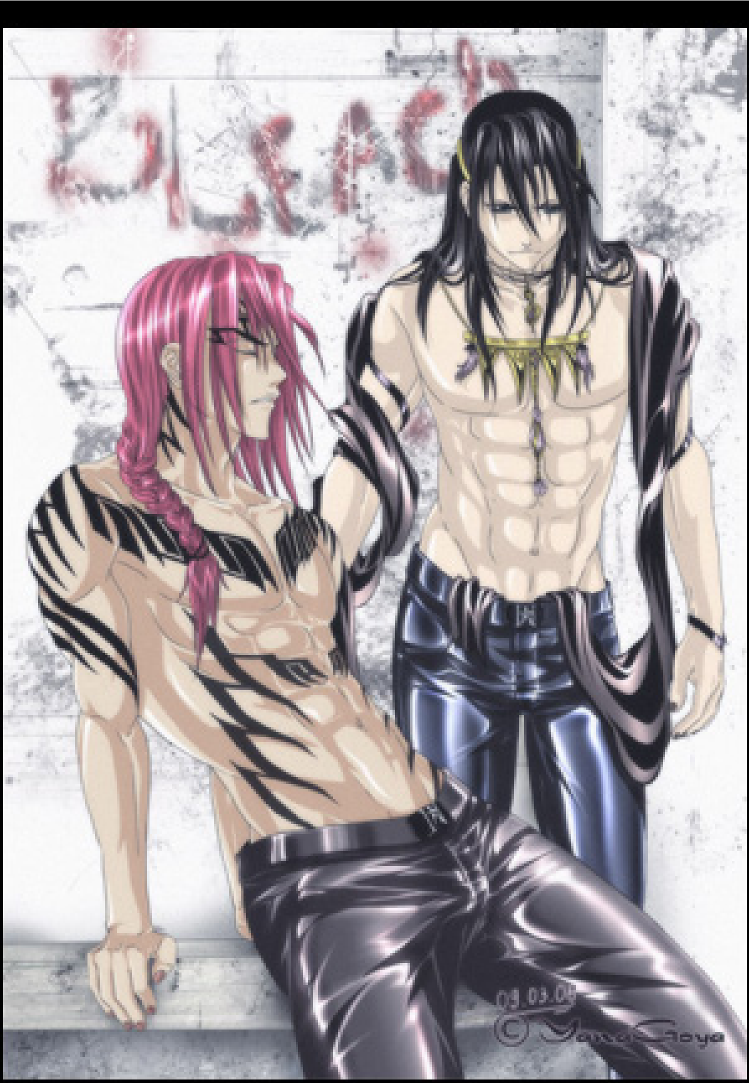


More of Yanagoya's fanart...

Top left to bottom left:
Cast from *Prince of Tennis,* Cast from *Naruto,*
Uchiha brothers

Top right to bottom right:
Byakuya & Hisagi - *Bleach,* Kurosaki Ichigo - *Bleach*


BLEACH
ブリーチ
©YanaGoya

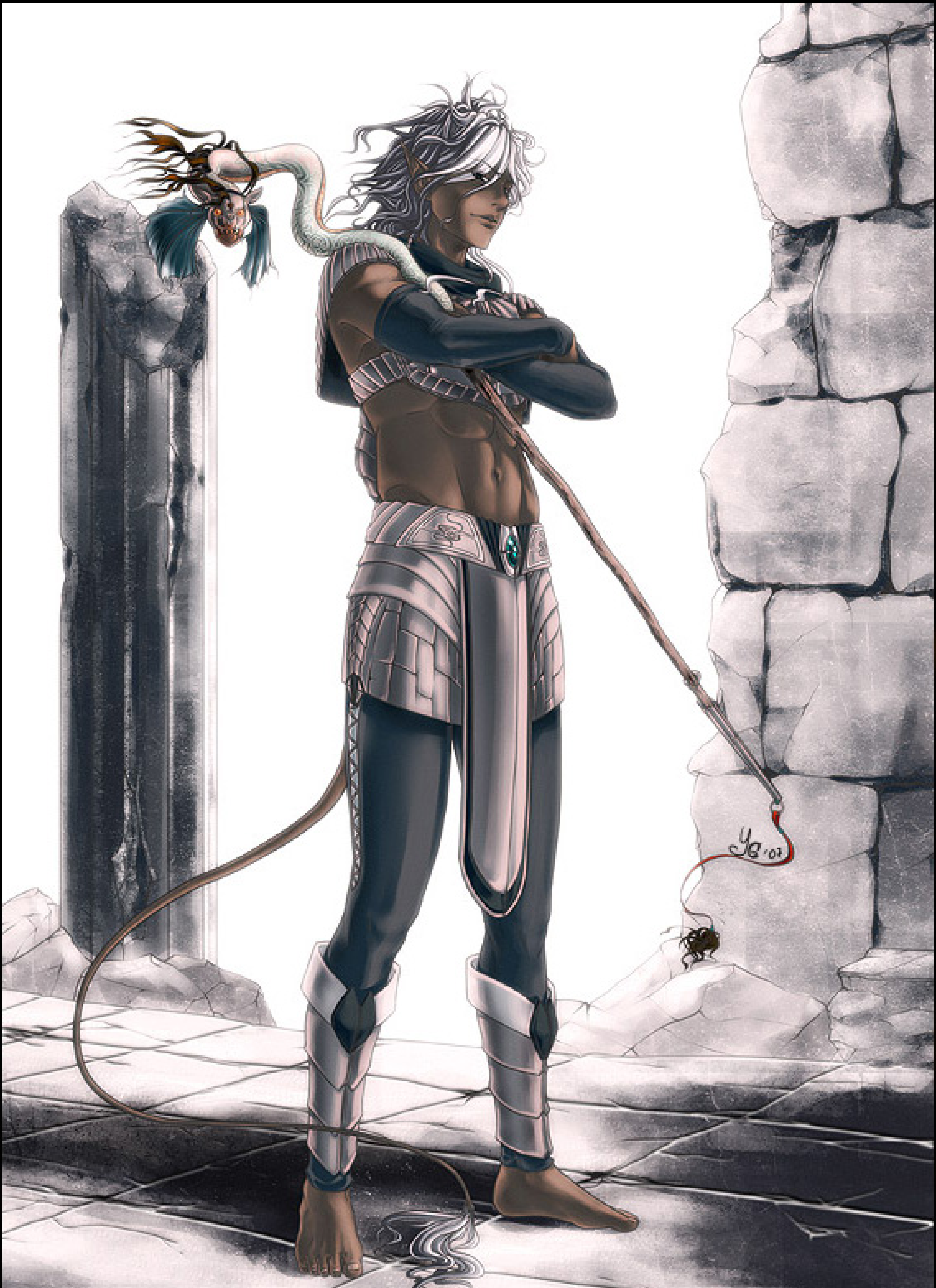

Bleach
09.03.05
© YanaGoya

20.03.2004
YanaGoya

More of Yanagoya's fanart...

Top left: Byakuya & Renji - *Bleach*
Top right: Nakago & Tamahome - *Fushigi Yuugi*
Bottom right: Yuki Eiri & Tohma - *Gravitation*
Bottom left: Kazuki - *GetBackers*

Yanagoya's latest original artwork...



Written by: malary

Edit: kriska22, Layout: Aarin
Pics from BL Game: Zettai Fukujuu Meirei

Are you a Yaoist?

So, you love yaoi, ne? But are you a YAOIST? (malary's term by the way). This simple test measures your craziness about this fantastic genre. Each choice has a corresponding point. Sum all the points you got from answering these questions and check your result. It doesn't intend to be serious at all, so don't be a party pooper. And be honest, no one is watching…

1. Do your friends know you like yaoi?
a) Only my closest ones.
b) Just online friends.
c) I keep that in private.
d) Haha! Even my postman knows.

2. Do you have the previous issue of Aarinsecret?
a) Nani? Isn't this the first one?
b) Eto… I kind of erased it…
c) Yes, and I was looking forward to download this one.
d) Are you kidding? I printed it and distributed copies to all my friends!

3. Do you write yaoi fanfiction?
a) Yes, I'm a very popular author.
b) I have published a couple of stories.
c) *nervous* Em, I keep my art in private.
d) Writing is not for me, but I have read some.

4. For how long have you been a yaoi fan?
a) Some weeks.
b) Some months.
c) Some years.
d) *sigh* Timeless…

5. Who is Dai-kun?
a) One of the hottest bishies ever.
b) A character of “Close the Last Door”.
c) Part of the Aarinfantasy staff.
d) A very famous Japanese seiyuu.

6. Do you download yaoi mangas?
a) Yes, buy only selected titles.
b) Not… really.
c) Sure! Come to momma!
d) Duh, I’m part of a scanlation team.

7. Do you have a folder dedicated to yaoi in your internet’s favorites?
a) What? No!
b) One for mangas, one for forums, one for reviews, one for galleries…
c) No, but it’s because I don’t organize my favs.
d) Yes! But there’s only one, I swear!

8. What about drawing yaoi?
a) Nah, I’m not very good at it.
b) I’m learning Photoshop because of it!
c) Um, I have some sketches.
d) Of course, I have my own mangas!

9. Have you started liking Japanese stuff because of yaoi?
a) It was because of anime & manga in general.
b) No, but it made me even more obsessed about it.
c) No, I’m not so into it.
d) Hai, watashi wa yaoisutu desu!

10. How many original manga do you own?
a) None. I get all my mangas from the internet.
b) Just a few, they’re expensive, you know?
c) I have a private collection.
d) None, I hate raws.

11. You dedicate to yaoi…
a) The afternoons. (not caring about homework anymore)
b) The weekend. (not caring about social life anymore)
c) Everything, I give up on fighting against it. (not caring about sleeping anymore)
d) Nothing too extreme, maybe some hours in a week?

12. Do you play yaoi RPG?
a) What's RPG?
b) I have, but it is awkward...
c) Everytime I'm at msn!
d) Only if the correct people are around.

13. Do you like yaoi games?
a) I'm planning on releasing one.
b) Yeah, I usually do some decision trees.
c) I tried a couple, but I just don't get it.
d) I never figured out how to install them.

14. Have you ever made a yaoi video?
a) Yeah, it's a hit on YouTube!
b) I'm planning on making one.
c) Yes, I did one in the past.
d) No, it's too complicated!

15. Do you have yaoi merchandise?
a) Only the files on my computer.
b) No! I don't know where to get it!
c) Yeah, dvd, mags & posters I found at a convention/comic store.
d) You name it! I bought it on Ebay!

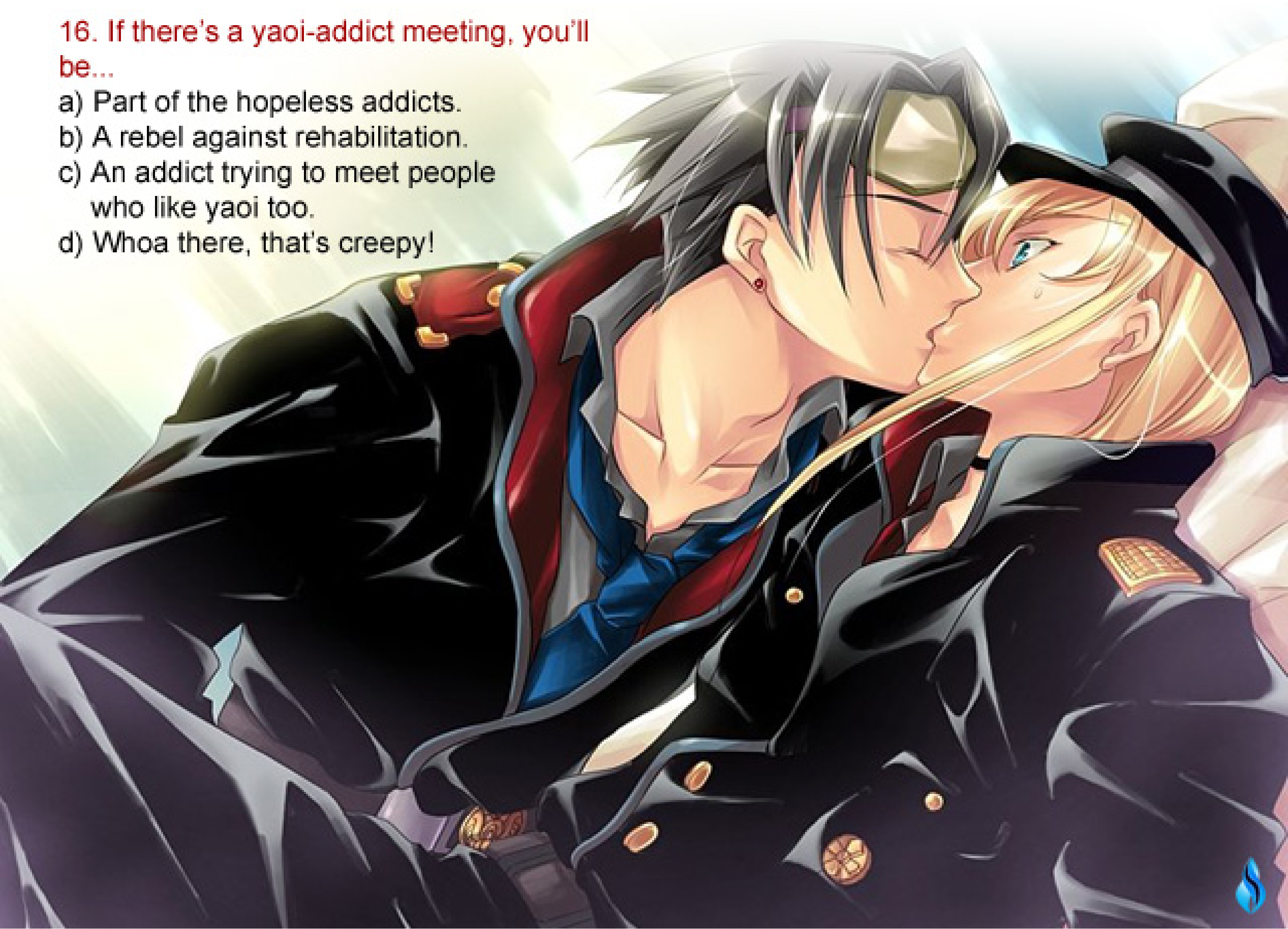
16. If there's a yaoi-addict meeting, you'll be...
a) Part of the hopeless addicts.
b) A rebel against rehabilitation.
c) An addict trying to meet people who like yaoi too.
d) Whoa there, that's creepy!

flights out

Lights Out:
Philippine Yaoi Convention

This is the official website of the Philippine's first and only independently-run Yaoi convention. LO has been holding cons for the past three years, including this year - May 26th, 2007

http://lightsout.punkednoodle.com



Are you a Yaoist?

Now figure it out!
1: a) 2. b) 1. c) 0. d) 3.
2: a) 0. b) 1. c) 2. d) 3.
3: a) 3. b) 2. c) 1. d) 0.
4: a) 0. b) 1. c) 2. d) 3.
5: a) 1. b) 0. c) 3. d) 2.
6: a) 2. b) 0. c) 1. d) 3.
7: a) 0. b) 3. c) 1. d) 2.
8: a) 0. b) 2. c) 1. d) 2.
9: a) 1. b) 2. c) 0. d) 3.
10: a) 1. b) 2. c) 3. d) 0.
11: a) 1. b) 2. c) 3. d) 0.
12: a) 0. b) 1. c) 3. d) 2.
13: a) 3. b) 2. c) 1. d) 0.
14: a) 3. b) 1. c) 2. d) 0.
15: a) 1. b) 0. c) 2. d) 3.
16: a) 1. b) 3. c) 2. d) 0.

37- 48 points

You're a Yaoist!

Yay, congrats, supreme fan. Just remember to eat once in a while and catch some sun.

25-36 points

You're a Super Yaoi Fan.

You have what it takes to molest virginal ukes and seduce unreachable semes!

13-24 points

You're a FanGirl.

You like yaoi but you're also into many other things. Don't worry, yaoi will capture you sooner or later.

0-12 points

You're... Normal?

Or maybe you're just embarrassed about liking yaoi. Just keep reading this magazine (muahaha!).

Scanlation Group:

Datenshi Blue

Doujinshi by Piyoko Chitose, Manga by Crocodile Ave., CJ Michalski, Kazuya Minekura, Sanami Matoh and more

HTTP://WWW.DATENSHI-BLUE.NET
Datenshi Blue

Dai•kun in aarinfantasy forum?

The man behind the forum management and settings. It wouldn't be possible without him... just who is he really? Let's find out...

Name:
Daisuke (not his real name but everyone calls him Dai-kun or Dai)
Age:
20
Location:
USA
Hobbies:
Anime, Online/Console Games, Volleyball, Tennis & Webmastering

Aarin: Dai-kun, everyone is asking me about you... They know you are a straight guy who manages the forum, not just any forum - it's a yaoi forum! People are curious and we decided to seize this opportunity by asking what they've always wanted to ask you. Everyone loves Dai-kun for the fact that he made this wonderful forum for the Aarinfantasy fansub group. You can say that he's my saviour after my own mini-forum got deleted/hacked. He quietly registered 'aarinfantasy.com' without me knowing it, and what a great surprise that was for me! We worked our way through the forum - but Dai does all the technical stuff and I provide the content. Slowly but surely the forum started to attract visitors every day. We met lots of nice people there but they are a curious bunch compared to any regular forumers, heheh.
Everyone's wondering how you and I met. I think it was at the Anime Reflections message board and it all started with Sukisyo, right? When was that? I don't exactly remember...

Dai-kun: I met you on Reflections, that's for sure. Since I was uploading new release animes on my server for the crew to download, you asked me if you could post the download links on your forum. I didn't know who you were at that time since, even with uploading your animes online, I don't watch half of the things I upload. I then went over to your forum to check it out, since you were posting my links there and I wanted to see how things worked out. A little while after, your forum was hacked. I took the initiative to make a new forum for you with the domain registered. We started with phpBB forum software, but as time went on, vBulletin became more suitable for the increasingly demanding forum. I had no idea about managing or controlling a forum. Aarinfantasy was my first. There was a lot to learn and a lot of coding to study. I remember staying up long nights and skipping meals in order to fix the forum since it was down due to an error – God knows where. I was putting the forum before everything else and that was the cause of my sucky grades in school. I finally realized that I need to study more and take care of myself, so that's why I am on and off on the forum.

Aarin: Aww, okay... the ultimate question that everyone wants to know. As we all know, the forum is mostly for girls and gays, and most straight men don't find it interesting. So, what made you participate in making this forum and managing it? You aren't involved only in the technical part, but you actually get involved with many things in the forum as well.

Dai-kun: I guess you could say I'm an altruist. It's interesting how the world works. I have very little interest in yaoi or BL itself. I am more concerned with people and helping them out. If I had to, I wouldn't mind creating a forum for yuri lovers, which would be of more interest to me.

Aarin: How do you find yaoi or the BL genre? Do you actually love them as much as we fangirls and fanboys?

Dai-kun: As stated before, I think I am on the lower end of the straw when it comes to Yaoi or BL. You (Aarin) know that I tried to watch BL animes such as Sukisyo and Gakuen Heaven but never ended up finishing them because it's very very... I guess you can say it makes me feel awkward. I do not enjoy watching guys dress up as girls, for one thing. The other thing is girly boys - I mean, I'll tolerate it - but it's not for me.

Aarin: Do you have a particular or a few yaoi/BL titles that you actually liked?

Dai-kun: Yes, I liked Kyou Kara Maou. I think I got to episode seventy something. It falls into a lot of the genres that I like. The only BL titles that I've ever watched are Sukisyo, Loveless, Kyou Kara Maou, and Gakuen Heaven.

Aarin: I am sure you have other genres that you enjoy watching or reading, What are the genres? What titles?

Dai-kun: I like fantasy, magic, ancient, fighting type of anime. My favorites are Bleach, Naruto, Code Geass, Death Note, Juuni Kokki, and a couple more. As for reading manga, there's a couple of shoujo mangas that I like. For some reason, I have more interest for cross dressing (girls as guys, not the other way) manga genre. Such as Power!!!, Never Give Up!, and a few others - I forgot the title.. something Juliet.

Aarin: I know you like experimenting and tinkering with the forum functions, to test what's good or bad. What sort of forum are you trying to achieve or shape it into? What level do you want to take it to?

Dai-kun: Yes, a lot of members will notice that from time to time, there are "errors" on the forum. This usually happens when I do testing and stuff, and I've accidentally forgotten to fix a code here or there. It usually takes me a couple minutes to get it back to normal, but there are times when I have no idea what I did wrong. As we all know, aarinfantasy has grown into the largest English yaoi forum. I have no idea if a similar forum exists in other languages that has such a large user and content database. I think the forum is making good progress so far and I do not intend to expand it into more than what it is now. The only things that need to be worked on are tweaking it and making sure it works as smoothly as possible. I'm now more concerned with things on the main site. My goal now is to make the largest and most reliable yaoi source that's out there, starting with Anime and Manga. There's still a lot to be worked on and the website/forum wouldn't be what it is today without its dedicated and helpful members.

Aarin: There are certain people in the forum... including me, who wanted to ask you this question - "Do you have a girlfriend?"

Dai-kun: No, I am actually married... to my school.

Aarin: Haha but girlfriend or not, we still hope Dai will continue to visit us and do what you do best! *big grin* Lastly, is there anything you want to say to the forumers?

Dai-kun: I am really thankful for all the help and time you guys have put into the forum, helping each other out and creating a pleasant place for everyone to enjoy. Also thanks everyone for putting up with me and understanding that I do have a life.

Aarin: That wraps almost everything up... so don't message me about Dai-kun anymore! Just kidding... Oh shoot! I forgot to ask one frequently asked question: Dai-kun's body measurement! Dai-kun, where are you?
looks around

Special Thanks: Yael

BL Drama CDs Group:

Hitsuzen.org
PROVIDING YOU WITH SUBBED BL DRAMA CDS

We´re subbing Drama Cds, meaning we translate them, create a video file with visualizations and sub it. The result is an avi video file that can be watched just like any other video file. Our aim is to bring people in contact with BL Dramas, which are a wonderful BL or yaoi world of their own, currently not open to people who don´t speak japanese. We hope to change that.
- lent @ aarinfantasy forum

Fans SpotLight

The individuals featured in this section are forumers of aarinfantasy.com

Forum Username: DazzleKitty
16, Female, USA - College student studying Japanese

When did you start liking yaoi/BL stuff?
I started to like it around the age of 12, when I first started to read fanfiction.

Why do you like yaoi/BL?
It's something different from the norm. Also, a romance between two attractive guys is very hot, and there are no female characters I feel the need to compare myself to.

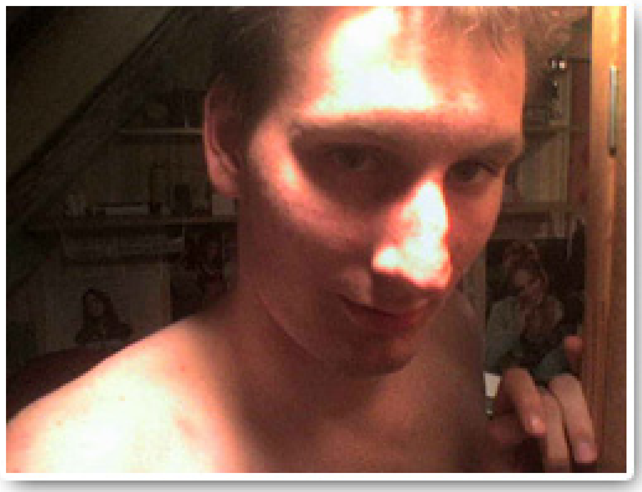
Does anyone in real life know about how much you like it?
Yes. My parents, my brother, his friends, my aunt, my cousin, and two former high school classmates.

Who is your fav character? Which is your fav yaoi/BL anime or manga title?
Kyo from Fruits Basket is my favorite anime character. As for my favorite BL character, if Gwendal from Kyou Kara Maou counts, he would be it.

Is there anything you dislike about the yaoi/BL genre?
I get very tired of seeing extremely feminine ukes. Some examples would be almost the entire Sukisyo cast, Shuichi from Gravitation, and Ayase from Okane ga Nai. I also tire of cliché such as an indecisive uke and pushy seme.

Complete this sentence "I had to stash away my yaoi when..."
my super-religious friend randomly dropped by for a visit. It actually didn't turn out too bad, because she found out about my yaoi love and then got drunk on beer and wine with me!

Forum Username: Black Lotus
19, Male, Netherlands - Garden Lover (?)



When did you start liking yaoi/BL stuff?
When I was 14 years old I came little by little in touch with it, first Gravitation (my sister bought) and of course I always like Boy X Boy relations, but when I was 18 years I really came into this world, because I always was too shy and now I got 2 Yaoi mangas.

Why do you like yaoi/BL?:
I like too see it when the love between 2 boys is growing, and how they work up and how they deal with the problems in the world, like people who don't like Boy X Boy relations. I always like a good plot and good art too, for me that's the most important in the yaoi manga.

Does anyone in real life know about how much you like it?
No not really, because I'm a shy guy, but also cause I need to feel ready for it when I want to tell my parents, and at the moment I just don't feel ready for it so I will take my time for it, but if I get a relationship then I will tell it my boyfriend of course ^^

Who is your fav character? Which is your fav yaoi/BL anime or manga title?
Since I came in touch with Kyou Kara Maou I can tell that Wolfram has taken my heart. And of course my favourite title will be Kyou Kara Maou then ^^

Is there anything you dislike about the yaoi/BL genre?
I dislike the manga that come from the USA, there's too much editings in them, I prefer them just from Japan and let them be translated in Europe.

Complete this sentence "I had to stash away my yaoi when..."
I was in bed and reading Black Knight, and at that time my mother came in so I just put in under my bed >.<

Fans SpotLight

The individuals featured in this section are forumers of aarinfantasy.com

Forum Username: ShiroiKuro
16, Male, Singapore - Studying

When did you start liking yaoi/BL stuff?
Well I started watching my first yaoi/BL anime at 13 years old...and that anime was Gravitation. SUICHI!!!

Why do you like yaoi/BL?
Well it's fun, interesting, nice to watch for a guy like me.

Does anyone in real life know about how much you like it?
Well there is one friend of mine who found out I was "obsessed" with BL/yaoi.

Who is your fav character.Which is your fav yaoi/BL anime or manga title?
I have too many favourite characters; I think everyone would be included including the bad guys especially Muraki from Yami No Matsuei.

Is there anything you dislike about the yaoi/BL genre?
Well not really they have a lot of great story lines so I really enjoy all BL/Yaoi.

Complete this sentence "I had to stash away my yaoi when..."
When my mom came in and I was looking at Sensitive Pornograph.

Forum Username: Akane1412
19, Female, Portugal - Studying

When did you start liking yaoi/BL stuff?
Kaworu x Shinji. Yet I only started understanding and loving it for real when I was around 14 years old with Gravitation.

Why do you like yaoi/BL?
Well... at first I used to only read shoujo... but the girls there were annoying and the stories were always the same, also, the best part on shoujo is the bishonens anyway... In yaoi and shonen ai I found the kind of love stories I like, with non-irritating characters and the bishonens are just gorgeous.

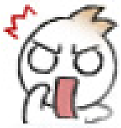
Does anyone in real life know about how much you like it?
Yes, my sister, my friends and my classmates.

Who is your fav character.Which is your fav yaoi/BL anime or manga title?
My fav character is Goku from Saiyuki and my favourite manga is Wild Adapter.

Is there anything you dislike about the yaoi/BL genre?
Yes, most stories are too short, and I also don't like yaoi with more sex than plot.

Complete this sentence "I had to stash away my yaoi when..."
I started to see romance in every pair of guys walking around town, and cursing them when they got to their girls ... then I had to get away from yaoi for a couple of days ^^º (hope that's the meaning of stash ^^º)

"My mom saw me watching Sensitive Pornograph!"



Got caught watching yaoi or reading yaoi manga by the people around you? We all know it's not easy to hide it from everyone, but some aren't afraid to show the world their love for yaoi. Here are some interesting and funny experiences shared by aarinfantasy forumers.

"My mom saw me watching Sensitive Pornograph! Whimper... it was during a sex scene... Agh! What do I do?!! Well, actually since I handled it badly, there's not much damage control I can do now." - ***lunefin***

"My mom saw once me watching Gravitation (a kissing scene between Yuki and Shuichi^^) and her comment was "Is it little unrealistic for a girl to have bright pink hair?" Hehe... It's my luck she doesn't see the difference between male and female characters so easily. " - ***Firefly***

"I never experienced something like this 'cause my mom is really very open-minded. At first she also couldn't tell apart which characters where girls and which boys, that often lead to her thinking I was into girls/girls things as she thought them all to be female "grins". I think she was much happier when I told her they are all male as she feared I was not interested in boys..." - ***WhiteLady***

"I was looking at a yaoi site when my father passed by... he was so shocked! Well... I just said that it was a pop up window" - ***jujika***

"My mother just shook her head when I told her I am watching "anime gay porn". Well... and later she asked me if I have a "good" (in other words: HOT) anime for her to watch "lol". My mother is actually easy with this kind of things... " - ***Kayuuko***

"My mother once walked in when I was watching Formula 17 and they were on the bed, about to bang. When I tried to close the window, my computer froze but the movie kept on playing. Then, just last week, she walked in on me changing while I had an H cg of Enzai on the screen. She thought I was... playing with myself ;_; " - ***Homicidal paperclips***

"I started to feel so alone in my weird country because there was no one but me who loves yaoi around here so I asked my grandma to watch stuff with me. She is really a lovely person and accepted. Don't tell me Gravitation again but we watched it. She liked it... can you believe it?! After that we talked about gay and bi relationships... " - ***purplepaws***

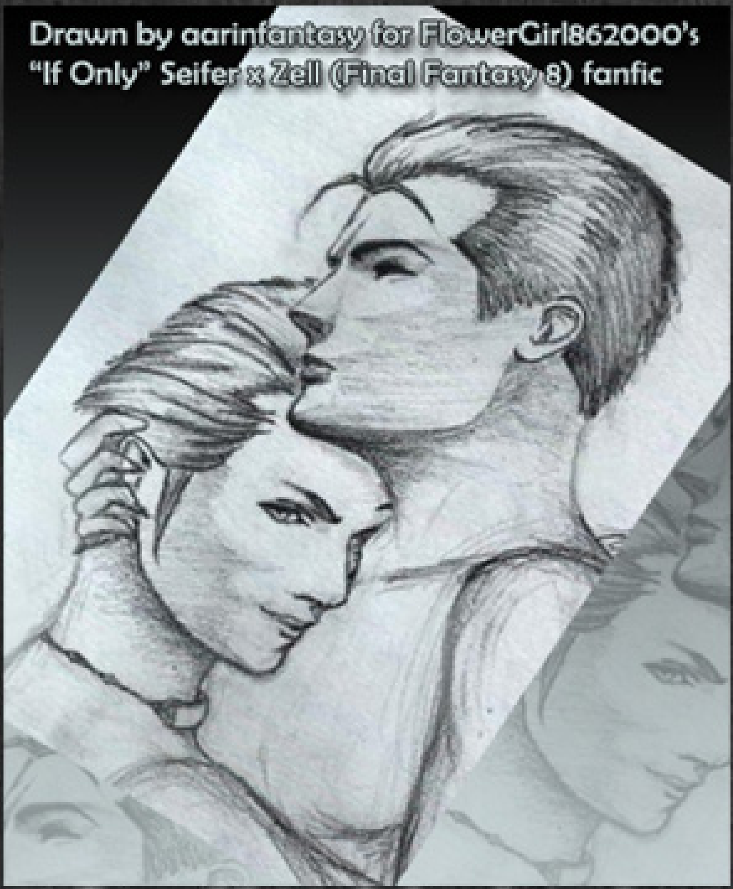
"I left all of my anime disks out and my brother's best friend grabbed a random disk out of the stack and ended up grabbing Sensitive Pornograph.... poor guy. He watched it four times before he realized what it was. At first he thought they were girls, then he realized they were guys and couldn't figure out what they were doing. He tells me everyday that I scared him for life." - ***Nebby4T***

"My parents know about my obsession for yaoi and shonen-ai. I told them it is a "anatomical study", told them some examples like "Michelangelo did simply the same (<<YAOI?! Anatomical studies)", that I have to learn more about male bodies (and how can you study muscles while they are wearing clothes?!) and asked them if they know any better method for studying male bodies than watch/read yaoi + I can learn a foreign language. After all they just nod and didn't say anything against it anymore."
- ***Master_Mind***

"You might be startled to hear that when my mother found out she tried to exorcise me... three times. She'd throw water in my face and slam me up against the wall before proceeding to shake me harshly against the wall. All the while she would scream things like, "DEMONS BEGONE!!! LEAVE MY CHILD IN PEACE AND TAKE YOUR PERVERTED DESIRES WITH YOU!!!" And crap like that." - ***MrsTaraYuyMaxwell***

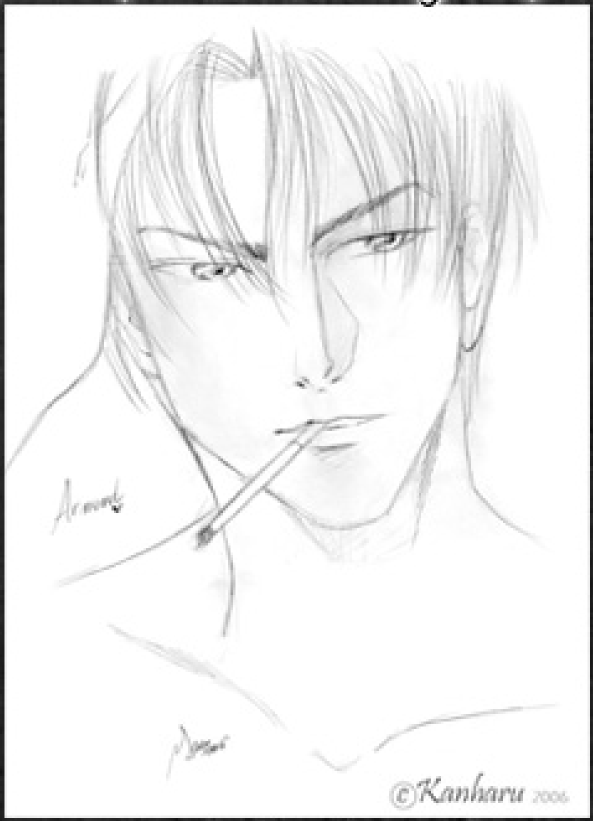
ARTWORK BY FORUMERS

All featured artwork belongs to respective artist who submitted to the aarinfantasy forum from 2006 - 2007.
Layout by szto

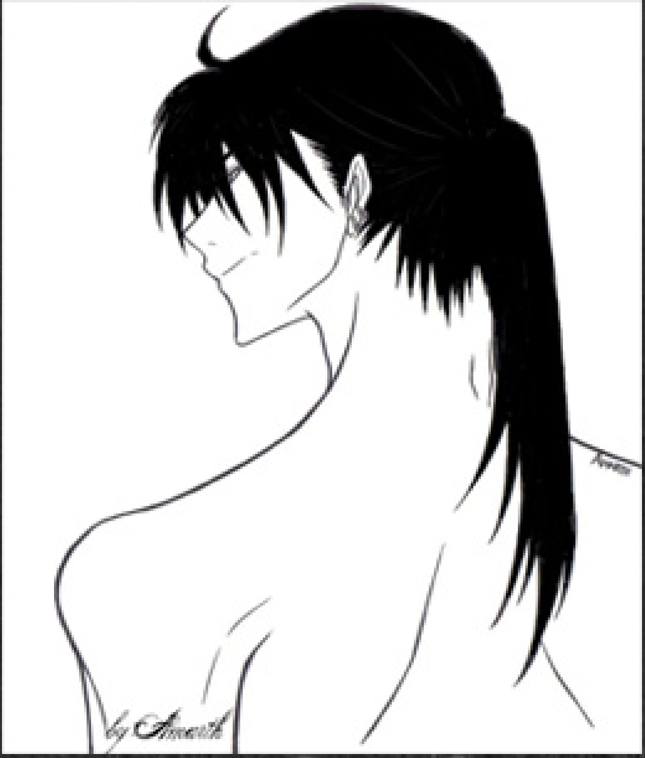


Drawn by aarinfantasy for FlowerGirl862000's "If Only" Seifer x Zell (Final Fantasy 8) fanfic

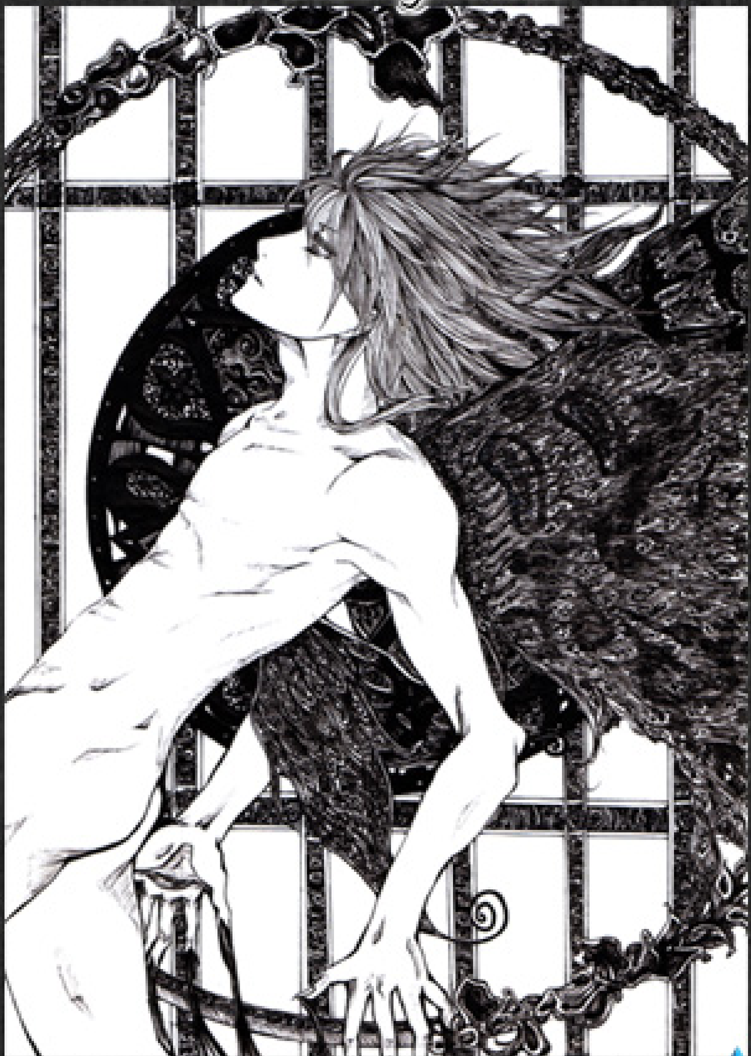
"Reflections of the Mind", drawn by aarinfantasy



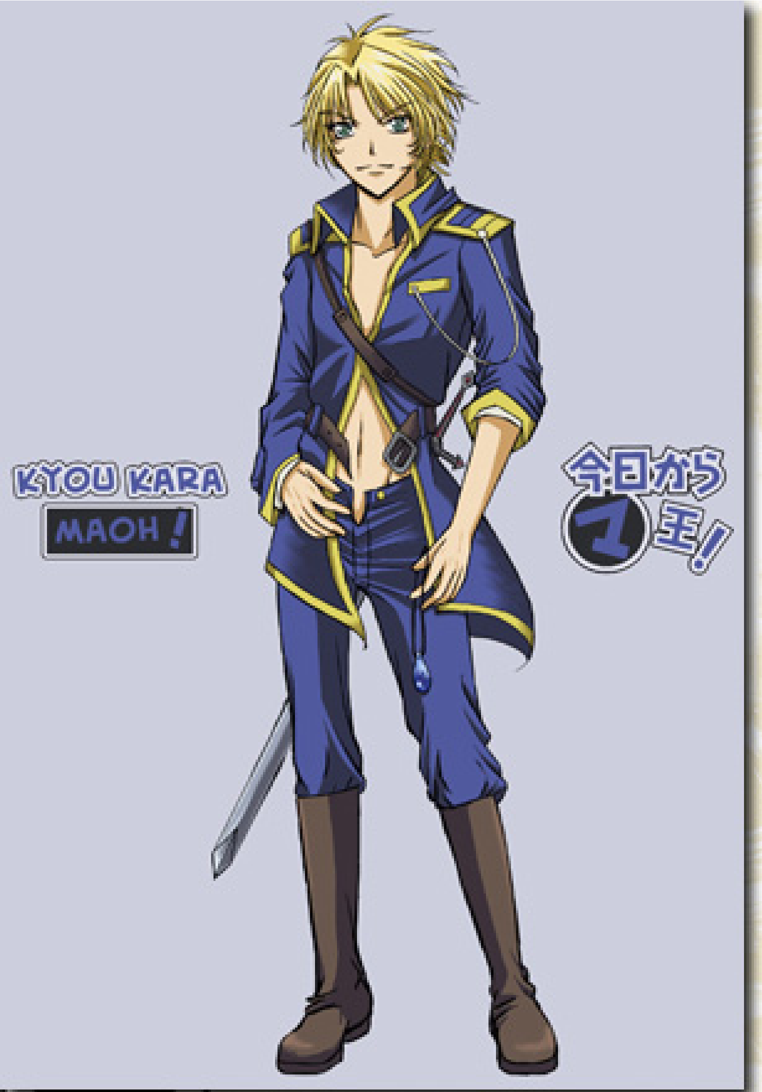
"Armend", drawn by: Kanharu



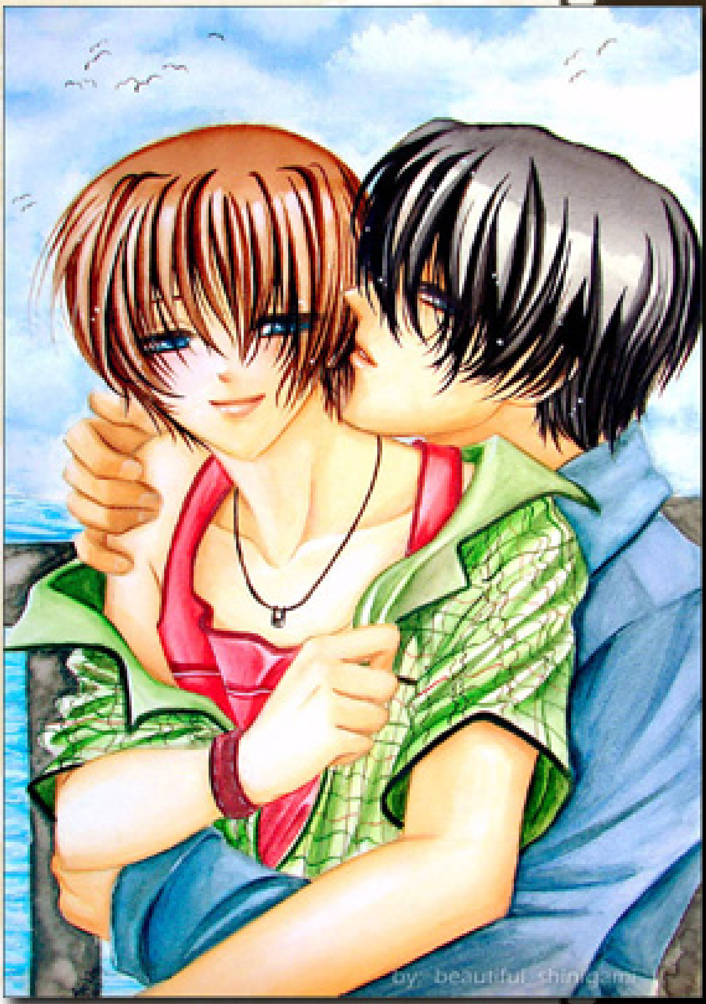
Drawn by: Amarth



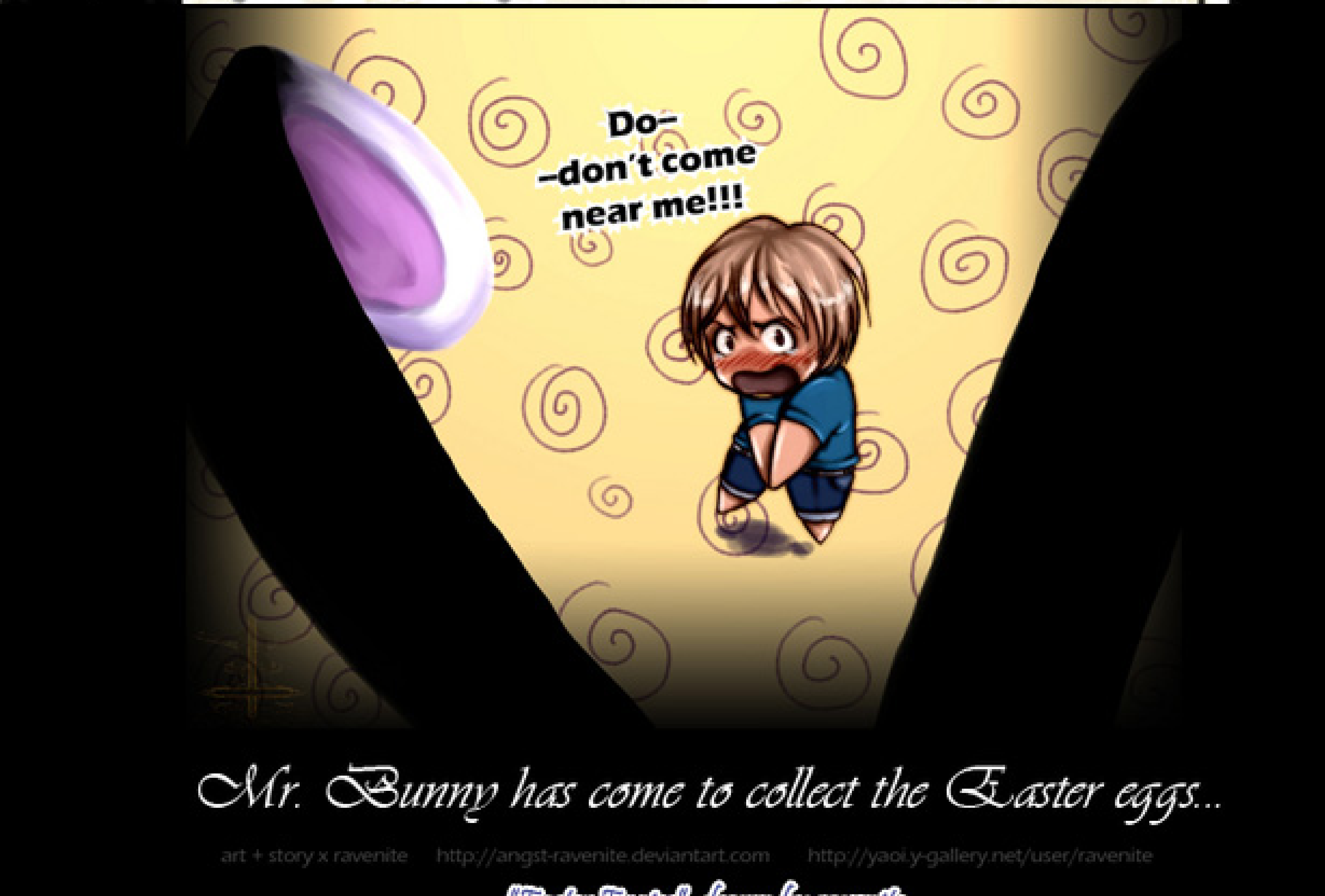
"Chou~ikizurai~", drawn by: kurogane


KYOU KARA
MAOH!
今日から
マ王!

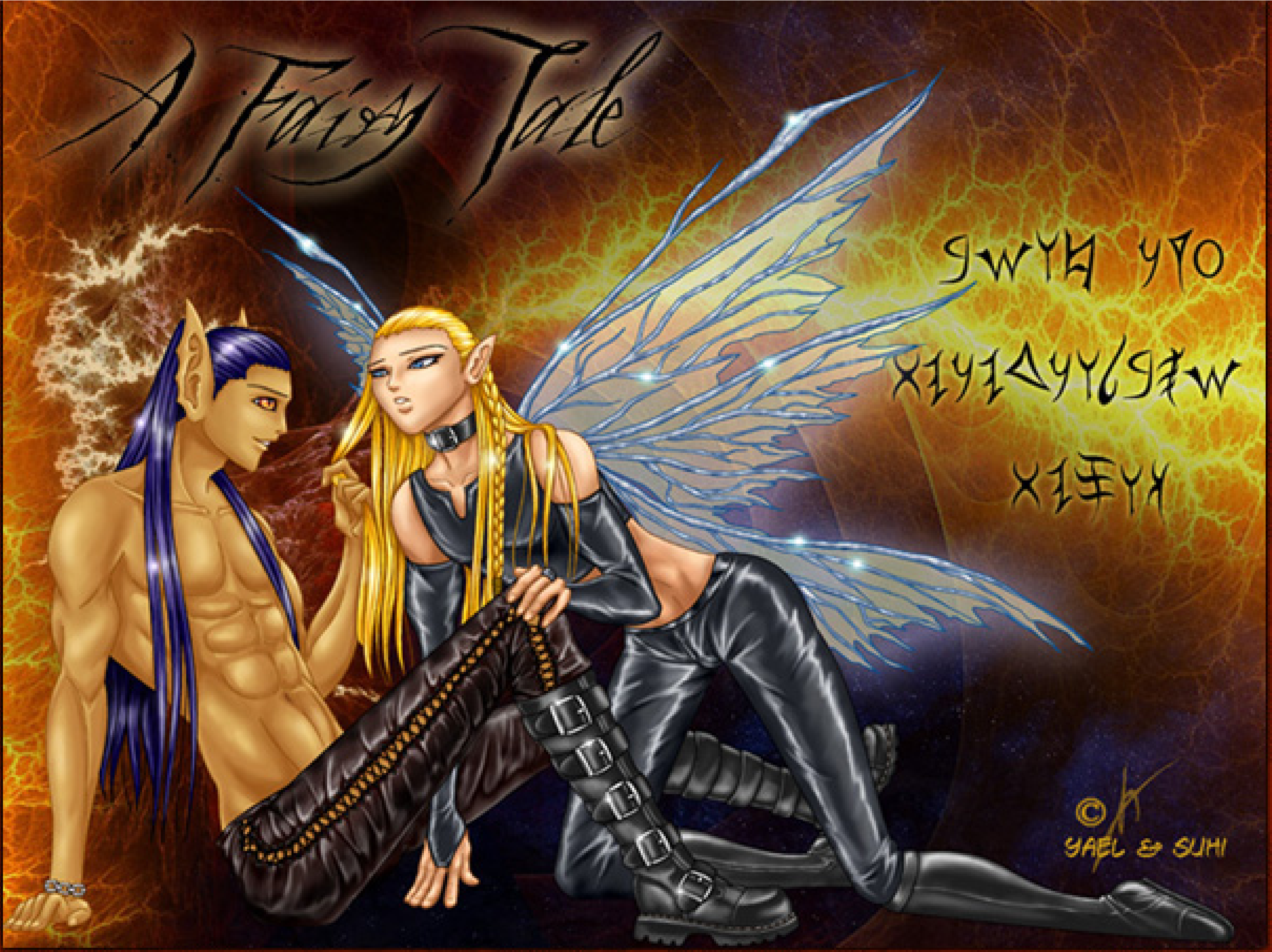
"Wolfram: Ready for Action!", drawn by: Kinna


by: beautiful_shinigami

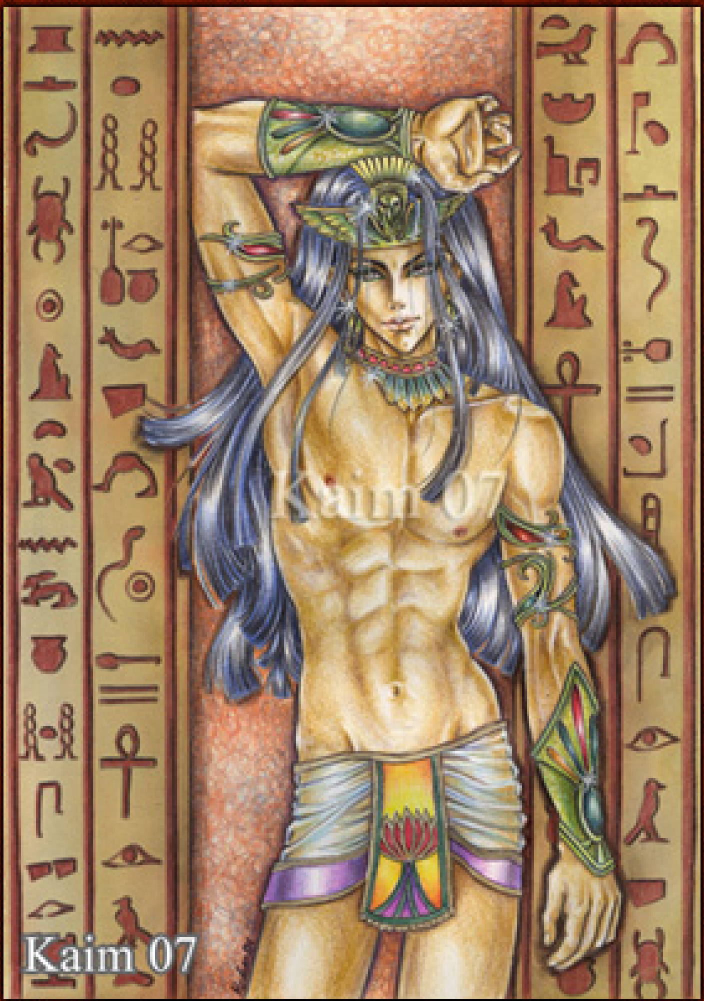
"Alex & Derek; Erotic Love", drawn by beautiful_shinigami


Do-
-don't come
near me!!!
Mr. Bunny has come to collect the Easter eggs...
art + story x ravenite http://angst-ravenite.deviantart.com http://yaoi.y-gallery.net/user/ravenite

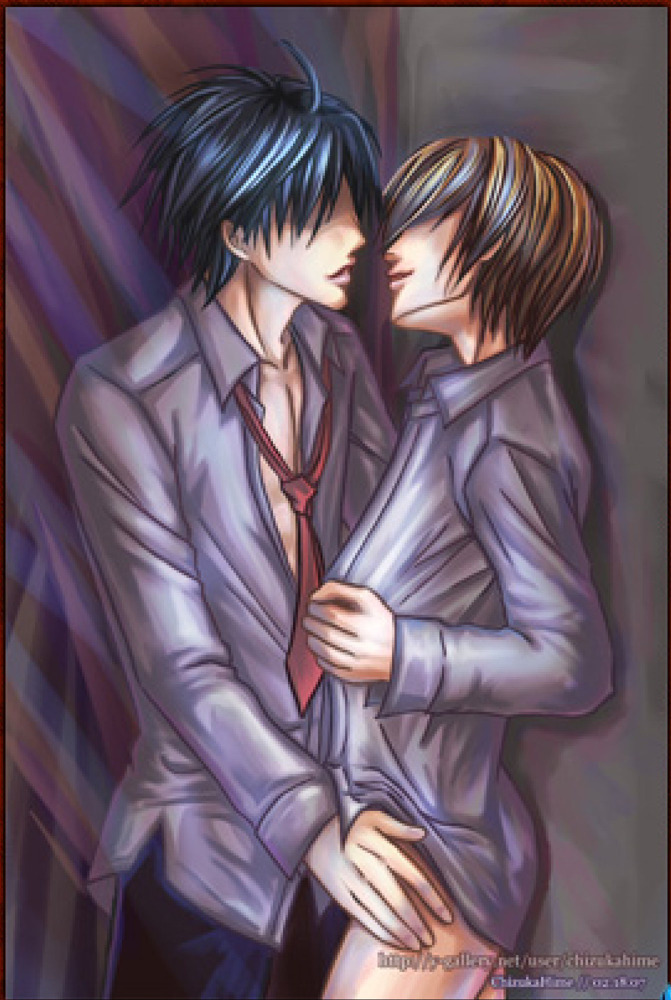
"Easter Eggies", drawn by ravenite


A Fairy Tale
© YAEL & SUHI

"Kalen and Orin: A Fairy Tale", drawn by: Yael, idea/QC: suhi


Kaim 07
Kaim 07

"Tutankhamen", drawn by: Kaim


http://y-gallery.net/user/chizukahime
ChizukaHime // 02.18.07

"Be My Valentine", drawn by: Saki

Cantarella

Manga Review

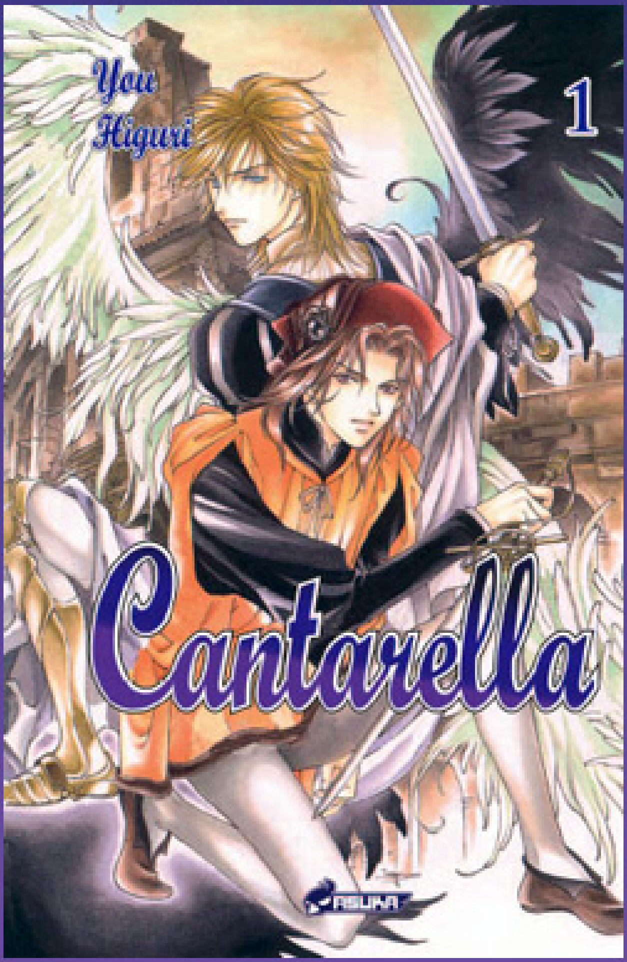
By Tessa Marlene aka Kittycountess

Edit: Miko Layout: Aarin

Cantarella is Higuri's latest work to make it to the North American shores. It is licensed by Go!Comi and 7 volumes have already been published.

Cantarella has Higuri going back to what she does best and loves most: European history. It's the fictional story of Cesare Borgia, the bastard son of a roman cardinal who is damned from birth by evil spirits.

Set in Renaissance Italy, the manga truly showcases Higuri's mastery in drawing beautiful backgrounds and pretty characters in period clothes as well as her extensive knowledge of Europe's ancient history.



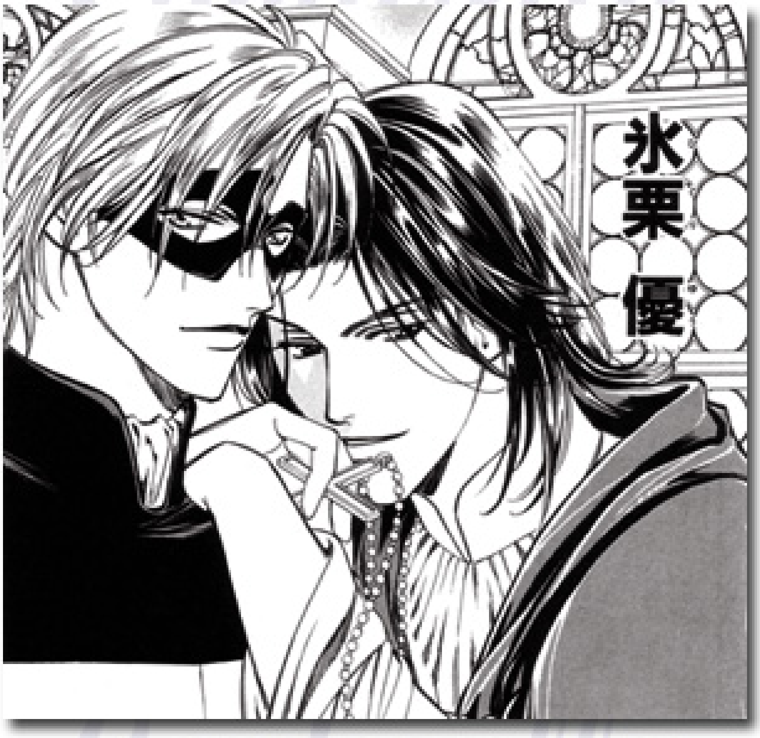
Synopsis:

Cesare Borgia had a damned soul from birth. His mother died. His father didn't want him. His only sanctuary was the arms of his loving adoptive mother, Vanozza. Even that was taken from him, leaving him alone to deal with the dark shadows surrounding his soul. This constant battle for survival turns Cesare into a harsh, calculating and at times, ruthless player in the religious and political chess field of late 15th century Europe. While his father fights with everything at his disposal – including the lives and destinies of his own children, to win the papal seat; Cesare has set out on a quest of his own, to gain power and status. His companion along the way is the mysterious Chiaro; whose identity is a secret to all, except for Cesare and a few of his loyal companions. When an assassin is dispatched to kill Cesare; Chiaro, his best friend, is now the only one who can save Cesare's soul from the darkness of complete possession.

Cantarella

Premise (7/10):

Cantarella's premise is a hard one to grasp. The first book seems to suggest that the story is about the suffering of a young, innocent boy who is unjustly condemned to a dark faith by the sins of his father; and who wants to be saved. As you delve further in the story however, and Cesare grows up, you realize he isn't as pure and virtuous as he was thought to be. Soon, you find yourself reading through a web of lies, betrayals, political conspiracies and supernatural possessions. It is all very compelling and interesting, but also leaves you wondering where it is all headed, and why. Who should you root for in a story where everyone's agenda is shady and self-serving? It also begs the question of what point Higuri sensei is trying to make with the narrative, aside from telling a tale of old times. Is she implying that humanity is doomed? That evil is so hard to defeat that you have no choice but to become one with it in order to survive? Or does she intend to add mystery upon mystery with behind the scene plots that would twist your head; just to give you a taste of what life was really like in Renaissance Europe? Is there even a point to looking for a moral in the story?

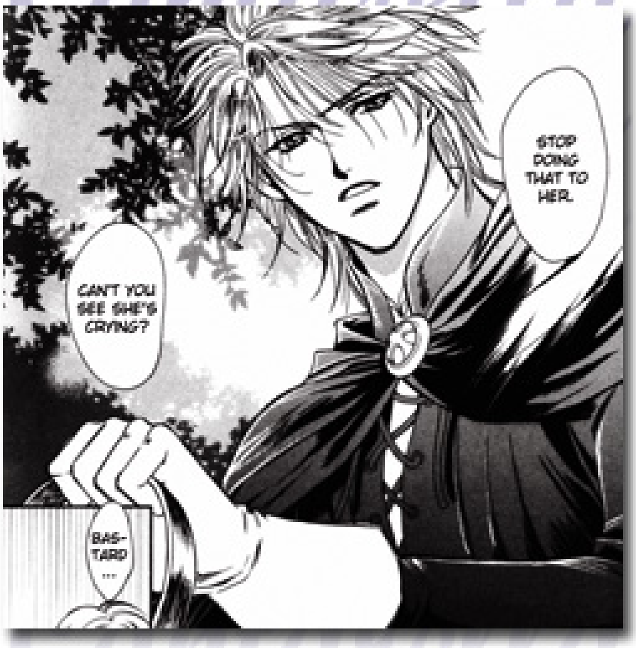


Characters (5/10):

Some of the many characters in Cantarella were based in actual historial figures. It is an intriguing concept to have the story intertwined with history in such a way, however Cantarella's greatest weakness is in its characters.

Personally, I have no problem with stories that feature countless characters; as long as there is enough variety among them and they are all handled skilfully. There are certain things that the reader always looks for in the cast of a story, such as diverse moral viewpoints and a few good characters to develop emotional attachments to. In Cantarella, however, most characters turn out to be dubious and untrustworthy in the end. It happens so many times that after a few chapters you wonder if it is wise to invest in any sort of affection for any of them. After all, is it worth becoming a fan of a character when they all eventually end up rotten, either because they have some secret agenda up their sleeve, or are inherently evil, or have become evil due to the circumstances of their lives? Even innately pure and saintly characters such as Vanozza and Cesare's sister Lucrezia aren't immune to this flaw. If they don't walk the path of betrayal and fall into the whirlpool of conspiracies, the supernatural forces that possess them will push them into it. The only character that I can vouch for who somewhat stays true to his original introduction is Chiaro, and he is an assassin who kills for a living. That alone should give you an idea about the moral altitude at which the characters of Cantarella live.

Cantarella

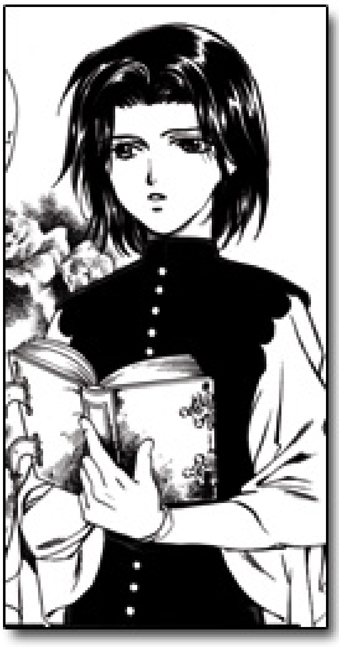

STOP DOING THAT TO HER.
CAN'T YOU SEE SHE'S CRYING?
BAS-TARD...

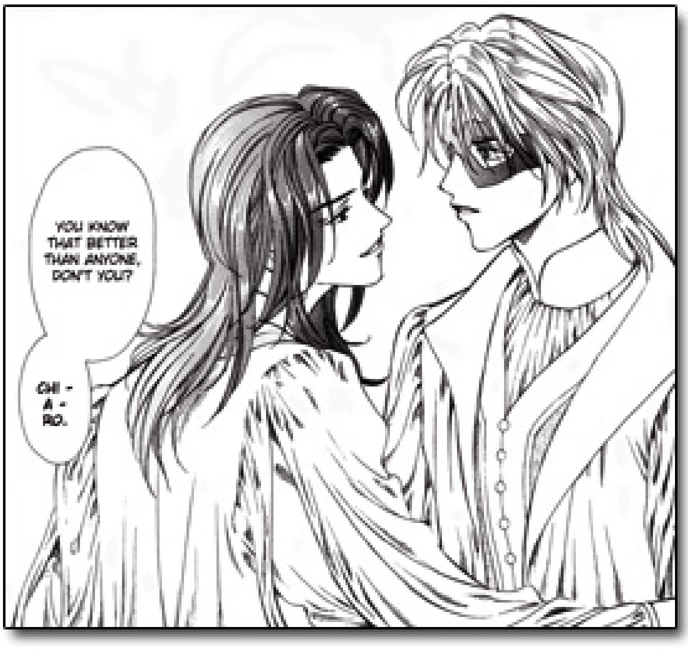
Story (6/10):

Since every story is directly influenced by its characters and premise, it's no surprise that Cantarella's story doesn't win the medal of excellence. Perhaps the best feature of the story is its setting and the inclusion of historical figures and events. However, shifting characters and an extremely convoluted plot make the story unstable and at a point it becomes absurd. You ask yourself why you should care about these people and their games when all that each of them strives for is their own personal gain. Perhaps if Cantarella had at least one morally grounded character with good intentions and decent behavior the story wouldn't be so adrift. One may imagine such character in Chiaro and argue that he might be able to assume that role. Unfortunately his unquestionable devotion to Cesare takes that honor away from him and puts him in the same pot as all the rest of the characters who resemble broken dolls in a careless child's collection.

Art (9/10):

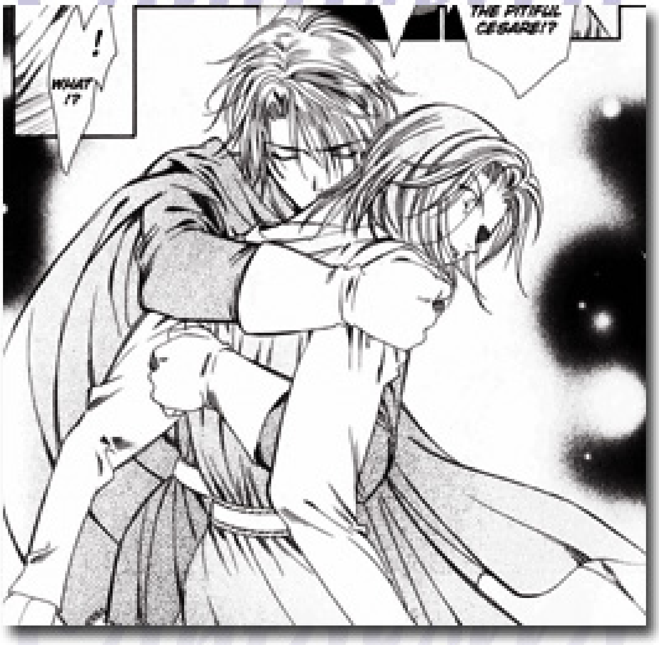
What really makes the series shine is Higuri sensei's beautifully intricate art. She has done an amazing job of capturing the mood and landscape of 15th century Europe with a great measure of accuracy. In this regard, the manga stands alongside notable works such as Berserk and the Rose of Versailles. It is no surprise; considering what we had seen from Higuri before, in Ludwig II and Seimaden. When she puts the pencil on the paper, she has an uncanny skill to create magic and bring images to life. Her talent is apparent in more than just the backgrounds she draws, but also with clothes, hairstyles and facial expressions. As with any Higuri manga, there is no shortage of beautiful boys in Cantarella, both Cesare and his best friend Chiaro are good looking bishounen and so are a few other characters in the book.




YOU KNOW THAT BETTER THAN ANYONE, DON'T YOU?
CHI-A-RO.

> " As with any Higuri manga, there is no shortage of beautiful boys in Cantarella "

Cantarella


THE PITIFUL CESARE!?
!
WHAT !?

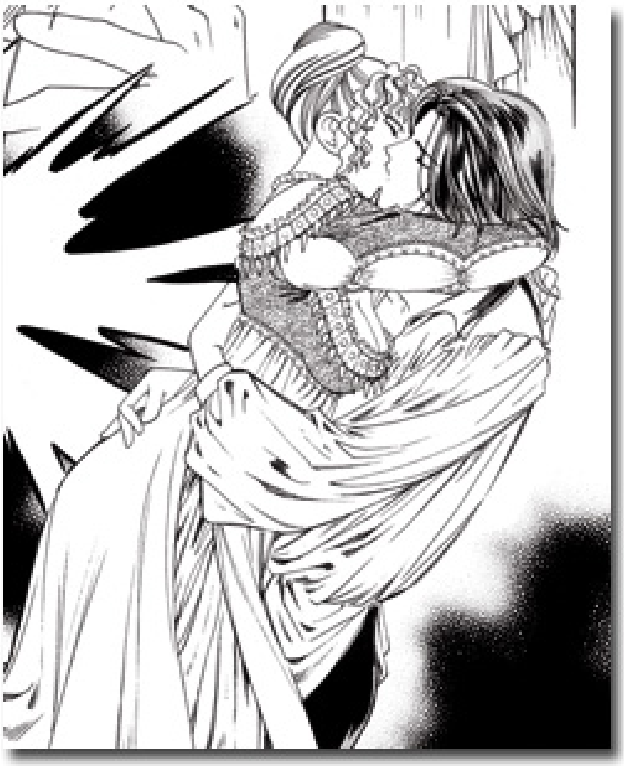
Overall (7/10):

Despite its flaws, Cantarella is a series that is worth checking out. Higuri's beautiful art, her undeniable ability to draw the most beautiful boys with the most heart wrenching facial expressions (Cesare in his young age is one of the cutest things to grace the manga scene) and the historical weight the series carries all make for a great visual and literal experience. It's no wonder that American Library Association has chosen Cesare as the first manga character to grace this year's "Read" poster. If you like historical drama spiced with a hint of Boy's Love and don't insist much on falling in love with the main characters, this manga is for you.

> "Unfortunately most of the fun is ruined by a pack of slutty females who keep meddling in the affairs of the boys..."

Yaoi aspect (5.5/10):

As any fangirl knows, you can't read a manga like Cantarella that features dashing boys swimming in angst, and not look for hints of Boy's Love. Cantarella is not too disappointing in this aspect, even though it isn't too generous either. There is obviously some emotional tension between Cesare and Chiaro who seem inseparable throughout the series. There are even suggestions that Cesare feels more than just friendship for his best friend even though Chiaro seems to have his eyes set on Cesare's sister, who is in love with Cesare. There are suggestions of possible BL connections between other characters such as Cesare's brother and the Turkish Prince Djem. Unfortunately, most of the fun is ruined by a pack of slutty females who keep meddling in the affairs of the boys and don't seem to want to keep their hands off of them. What's worse is that we are more likely to see more action between them and the boys than between the boys themselves. In this sense, Cantarella resembles Weiss Kreuz. In both titles, the audience is dying to see the main characters hook up and make out, but is constantly assaulted by unimportant, annoying females who do nothing for the story but to steal the guys away from the right path and rub themselves all over them.



Written & layout by **n0rth_s34**
Edit by **szto**

The Other Side of You

TOSHIMI ARINA PRESENTS
向こう側

Kimi no Mukou Gawa *(The Other Side of You)*

Author: TOSHIMI Arina
Genre: Shounen-ai
Publisher: Chara Comics / Tokuma Shoten
Story lengh: 2 volumes (Complete)
Status: Project **COMPLETE**

ISBN4-19-960075-2 **Nakama** http://nakamanga.com
ISBN4-19-960115-5 **MFY** Joint with **Nakama**
http://www.death-note.net/mfy/

To what length would you go through to keep a friend?

Synopsis:
Best friends Sakisaka Shou and Hirose Takashi parted after their first year of junior high with no promises exchanged. Takashi's attempts at communication by means of letters and phone calls went unanswered. Two years later, first year of senior high, Shou comes back but makes efforts to snub and tries to distance himself from Takashi. Takashi, however, is overjoyed yet confused because of Shou's unexplained behavior so he pursues Shou hoping to bring back the happy childhood days of playing and hanging out together. Once again, Shou makes plans to move as far away from Takashi as possible.

Also, who is Kanako, and why is she living with Shou? Why did she go to Takashi's house and why is she seen walking to school together with him each morning? What will become of the friendship of these three?

Innocence, love and perseverance will unite the lovers in the end... but who will be with whom?

My 2 cents:
How many times have I read *Kimi no Mukou Gawa*? ..more than I care to admit.

Will I read this again? Definitely. But not so much that I would come to hate it. **That's** how much I love **Kimi no Mukou Gawa** - so much so that I dredge up the strength to stop myself from reading it non-stop, over and over again – because I **DON'T** want to hate it.

Kimi no Mukou Gawa's charm is due both to its soft and simple art and the progressive development of its characters, story and a touching ending. Rather than diverting our attention from the storyline with background textures and smuts, Ms. Arina instead directs our thought on each character's expressions. I love the look in Takashi's eyes when he is angry or determined. I can imagine it capable of piercing Shou's defensive attitude, leaving him without a wall to stand behind. Seeing Shou's disdainful and tormented look of resigned love and Takashi's bewildered yet determined eyes whenever he thought of Shou melt my yaoi-jaded heart.

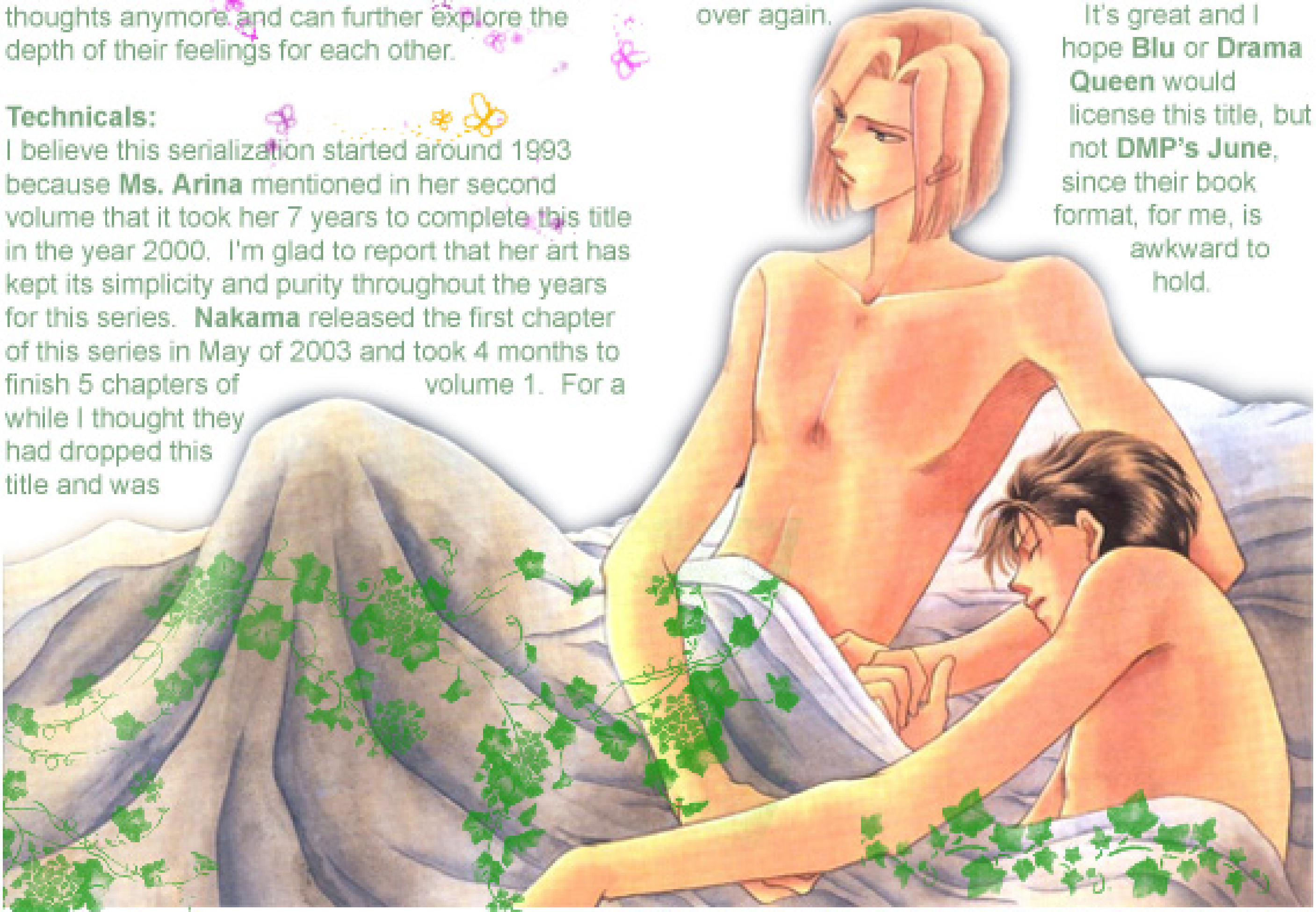
And unlike those insecure-girly ukes or his more-than-perfect-and-accomplishing semes story arc, Kimi no Mukou Gawa presents us a couple of equal footing in intellect, physical fitness and emotional connection. They complement each other in uniqueness when dealing with their feelings - one who runs away from his feelings and one who engages them head-on. When they become adults, rather than one side giving out too much while the other is incapable of taking care of himself, they will be able to support each other and depend on each other for emotional comfort. I believe they can overcome anything as long as they have each other.

I like how I could understand both lovers' reasons for their behavior, how their thought influence their course of actions – by accident or through design. Maybe absence does make the heart grow fonder. The years of separation are exactly what Shou needs to draw a line between his and Takashi's friendship and cross into that of lovers. And thanks to Kanako, rumors of their relationship made the round at school. We know why she did it, but as for supporting what she has done, that depends on us individual readers. Personally, I applaud what Kanako did because that way Shou and Takashi don't have to expend their time on unnecessary thoughts anymore and can further explore the depth of their feelings for each other.

Technicals:
I believe this serialization started around 1993 because **Ms. Arina** mentioned in her second volume that it took her 7 years to complete this title in the year 2000. I'm glad to report that her art has kept its simplicity and purity throughout the years for this series. **Nakama** released the first chapter of this series in May of 2003 and took 4 months to finish 5 chapters of volume 1. For a while I thought they had dropped this title and was very disappointed, only to be delighted when Nakama released volume 1's extra in February of 2004. My happiness didn't last long because nothing else was heard of from this series for a ***long*** time until **Memory For You** decided on a collaboration with **Nakama** to finish it and release it as a joint project at the end of July and completed it mid of August of 2004.

Considering the fact that **Nakama** started its group in April 1st, 2003, Kimi no Mukou Gawa is one of its first projects. The quality doesn't suffer much, however. Their scans are clean and easy to read. Its translation is easy to understand despite some typographical errors and grammatical errors which I could completely ignore because I was immersed in what was unfolding in the story. Coincidentally, **Memory For You** also has Kimi no Mukou Gawa as one of its first project because when they released the second volume, MFY has only been in operation for two months. However, you can note the marked improvement in the tone of the scans and the rightness in the way they proofed the translation. Their efforts are not wasted, I swear. Then again, I really don't care because the story is just too absorbing.

Side note:
If you've read this, read it again. It's about time to revisit your yaoi folders and read your favorite because, really, is there any good new story out there? Seriously, I fell in love with this story all over again. It's great and I hope **Blu** or **Drama Queen** would license this title, but not **DMP's June**, since their book format, for me, is awkward to hold.



© TOSHIMI Arina ~ Kimi no Mukou gawa (The Other Side of You)

© Ougi Yuzuha ~ Rising Storm *(Arashi ga Oka)* ~ Drama Queen
© Shimizu Yuki ~ Recipe

Scanlation vs License

Don't Make Me Choose!

Special Thanks to **szto** for re-crafting this article.

A shout out to all the **scanlation groups**. You've all worked hard and we LOVE you!!!

A *"You rock!"* to the **licensing companies**. **Finally** we can have an English manga in our hands to read!

An essay? A discussion? A debate? No. None of the above. I do not wish to rehash the debate of your preference of one over the other nor is this a discussion because your views are not taken into account nor credited. And the length of this article is not long enough to be an essay (thank the Good Lord). The following article is just my rumination on how many of us feel as a *boy-loves-boy* lover. How could I subsist solely on the meager releases of yaoi licensing companies? However, how can I not throw my support behind the titles I love? Fortunately, I don't have to choose because scanlation groups are still doing their work while the licensing companies increase their releases of non-scanlated titles. So much has changed during the past year that I feel like reminiscing on its adaptation to the times.

A year has passed since this magazine's last publication in May 2006. Many aspects have changed in both the scanlation community and the yaoi publishing community. During the past year*, scanlation groups have released roughly 120 completed titles and a slew of one-shots and incomplete or near to complete titles. Licensing companies like **Drama Queen**, however, have announced roughly 200 licensed titles – much better than the number of licenses announced the previous years combined.

© Tooko Miyagi ~ Il Gato Sul G ~ DMP Juné Manga

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* as of June 01, 2007

These 15 companies have only released half of what they intended on the collectively proposed list. Taking all the completed scanlations of the past year into consideration, I only liked about 15 releases, such as **Negai Kanae Tamae** by *Nishida Higashi*, **Dear Green** by *Fujiyama Hyouta*, **Junjou Karen** by *Meiko Koide*. Of the titles released, or due to be released by licensing companies, only 25 caught my interest out of the 200. Statistically speaking, the titles I like from both sources are 12.5% of the number of titles available. I need to add that following this same logic, I prefer scanlations to licensed titles simply because there are more completed projects available considering that the 25 licensed titles are not all published as yet.

Your honest DECEIT
影木栄貴
DEAR MYSELF
Only the Ring Finger Knows

Sadly, during last year, there were several groups that announced their retirement such as **Mochi*Mochi**, quite a few who released only a handful of chapters for the whole year, and more than half the groups are short of staffs (**DokiDoki**, **Tsuyu Translations**, and probably almost all the other groups), and this affects the number of releases. It seems that the fate of those groups is not theirs alone but affecting that of a yaoi publishing company like that of **BeBeautiful** also. **BeBeautiful** has complications concerning rights to their series so we will be deprived of their releases as well. All is not that dreary, however.

Last year, we saw new scanlation groups including **Liquid Passion**, **Attractive Fascinante**, and **AarinFantasy**, and notably, we see one person and one artist/manga focus groups such as **Half-Baked Scanlations**, **Volyund**, and **AoiLevelina** spread their wings to bring us yaoi fans more releases and maybe to make up for those departed groups. Why couldn't those new groups help out the older ones in need of staff? This has to do with the philosophy and the friendly atmosphere within the group and the list of future titles that entices and lures prospective teammates. New groups sprout because they want to have their own say of the titles that should be released. They do that of their own free will and as artistic contribution to the hobby that they love. Yaoi publishing companies, as a business, are bound by laws and contracts and limitation of budget so they cannot just go ahead with any project. They too have increased in numbers over the past year.

We have more expectations of what a printed manga book should look and read like. Since they are professionals, there shouldn't be any typos nor slip-up in grammatical errors. We expect the background, should it be missing after the words were edited out, to be cloned and made presentable. We expect the size of the manga book to be familiar, as opposed to the size **DMP** has come up with for their June prints. I believe the printed books that I've read so far are up to par 99% of the time. Because nothing and no one is perfect; I don't have any gripes about a few flaws at all – as long as the story is good. With scanlations, I don't know what you think, but the groups' releases are more and more pleasing with each passing month: the cleanliness of the scans, the placement of the text, the translations, and the free direct downloads! Though there are differing expectations when viewing different format of yaoi releases, there is one thread in common in what people choose to read – a good story.

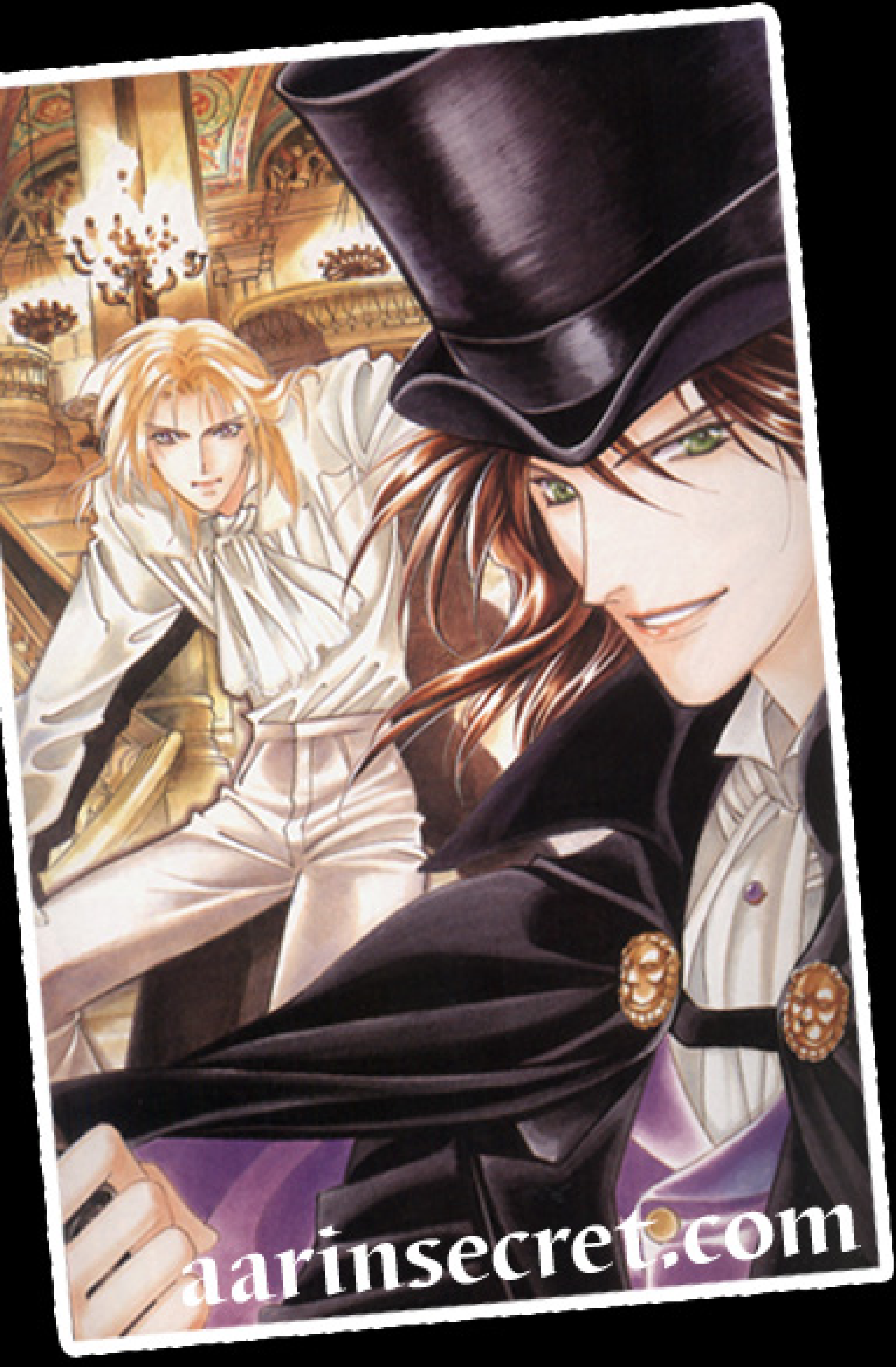
As I said, I don't want to state a choice here, and I don't feel like I need to. Instead of just those 15 completed scanlations, I was able to read 30 series this year, thanks to the printed media's contribution to the yaoi industry. I'll keep thanking the scanlation groups as often as possible for their efforts, and now I can give props to my favorite artists as well by purchasing their works!

I hope you'll also have fun exploring the new releases! To make your choice easier, we've launched a review site that you can access from the **AarinFantasy.com** main page. You'll find information and summaries of your favorite scanlations and licensed manga as well. Also, check out the couple of review articles of both scanlated and printed works enclosed in this magazine. Happy reading!

Written & Layout by: n0rth_s34 ~ **Edit by:** szfo by Tessa Marlene aka Kittycountess

Gorgeous Carat

Gorgeous Carat is Higuri You's masterpiece and gift to the yaoi community. It is easily her best work and one of the best licensed yaoi themed mangas, to date. BLU is the publisher and there are 4 volumes of the manga in total; 3 of which have already been translated and published.



Florian Rochefort, the sole descendant of the noble Rochefort family has his life turned upside down when, in order to save the family from bankruptcy and pay his mother's mounting debt, he agrees to be sold to a mysterious and charming man called Ray Balzac Courland. Little does Florian know, that Ray is in truth, the phantom thief Noir who devastates Paris' upper class society by stealing the most treasured jewelry from the rich. Soon, Florian gets involved in Ray's dangerous affairs while trying to save what is left of his dignity, by refusing to submit to the charismatic thief. It is not an easy task since Ray is not only a master at acquiring prized jewels; he also has the necessary skills to keep them. He is also dead set on keeping Florian and his enchanting amethyst eyes all to himself against all odds.

Edit : Miko // Layout : Aarin

Premise (9.5/10):

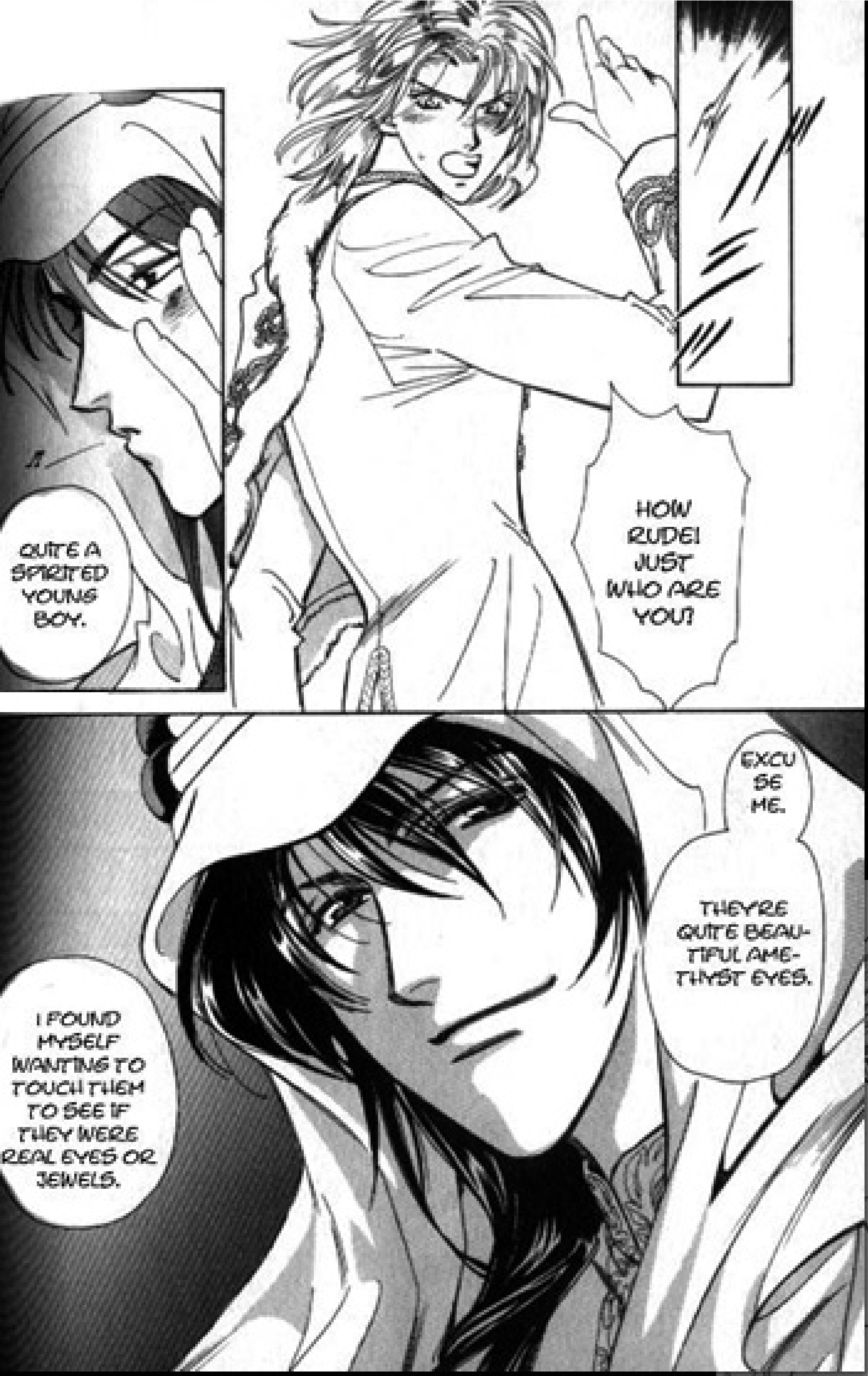
Without exaggerating, I say that whatever an adult yaoi fan could wish for is present in GC. The premise alone would make a fan's mouth water. Imagine a beautiful aristocrat boy sold to a dashing phantom thief whose charms, no one can resist. Add Higuri You's penchant for bondage, whips and forceful, heated love-making and you know where this manga is headed. But, as if that premise alone wasn't enough; in the third chapter the story takes a new turn, transporting the characters to the far off lands of Maghreb (Morroco) and introducing yet another striking seme. This one is positively evil, making our boys' lives a lot more complicated and really brings on the angst. Higuri sensei just keeps delivering.

GORGEOUS CARAT
1
YOU HIGURI
青 BLU

Characters (9/10):

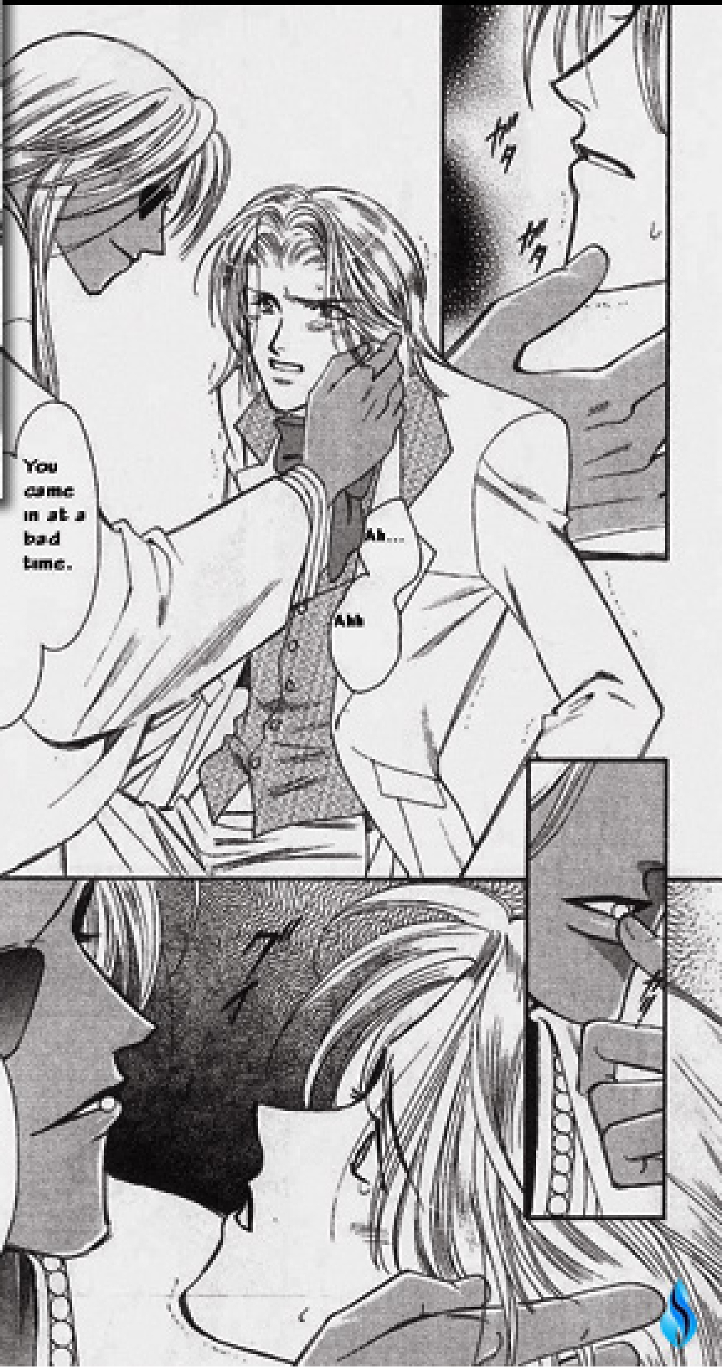
What can I say about GC's characters? They are pretty. As is expected from Higuri's art, they are likable and there aren't too many of them. Higuri just manages to get the work done with the minimum number of players who all have a key role in the story. The highlights of course are Florian and Noir, perfect uke and seme for a relationship that every yaoi fan would die for. Florian is innocent yet courageous and carries his heart on his sleeve. His noble upbringing has given him delicacy but the hardships of life in poverty have made him tough and kept him from getting spoiled. Noir, at first seems to be all charm and style, yet he too has a vulnerable core that shows up just at the right moment; especially when he goes out of his way to protect his precious amethysts. The icing on the cake is Azura, Ray's childhood friend and seme to him in all ways imaginable. When he decides he doesn't want anyone else to own Ray's heart, he sets out to execute a vicious plan that would separate Florian and Ray. Even the love struck Laila is adorable; rare for a female character in a yaoi book. Her presence is unobtrusive and provides the requisite angst-filled care for our bishounen.

The only character that I found somewhat disappointing was Ray's cousin Michel, who shows up towards the end of the third volume. I assumed his presence was to provide a romantic love interest for Laila since she obviously didn't have a chance with Ray but that didn't happen. Michel's character continues to remain pointless and on the side for no apparent reason.


HOW RUDE! JUST WHO ARE YOU?
QUITE A SPIRITED YOUNG BOY.
EXCUSE ME.
THEY'RE QUITE BEAUTIFUL AMETHYST EYES.
I FOUND MYSELF WANTING TO TOUCH THEM TO SEE IF THEY WERE REAL EYES OR JEWELS.

Art (9/10):

There isn't much I can say about Higuri's art that hasn't been said before. Like all her other manga, this one features beautiful art both in characters and backgrounds. The locations look believable no matter where in the world the story takes us. The boys are cute and they show a massive range of facial expressions that would convey their emotions even without speech bubbles. Higuri doesn't pull any punches. She gives what is needed in the artwork and in storytelling. We couldn't have dreamed of a better artist to draw the panels for this amazingly delicious tale.


Ah...
Ahh
You came in at a bad time.
Fell upon some bad things.
Fight or cry out,
and I will likewise kill you

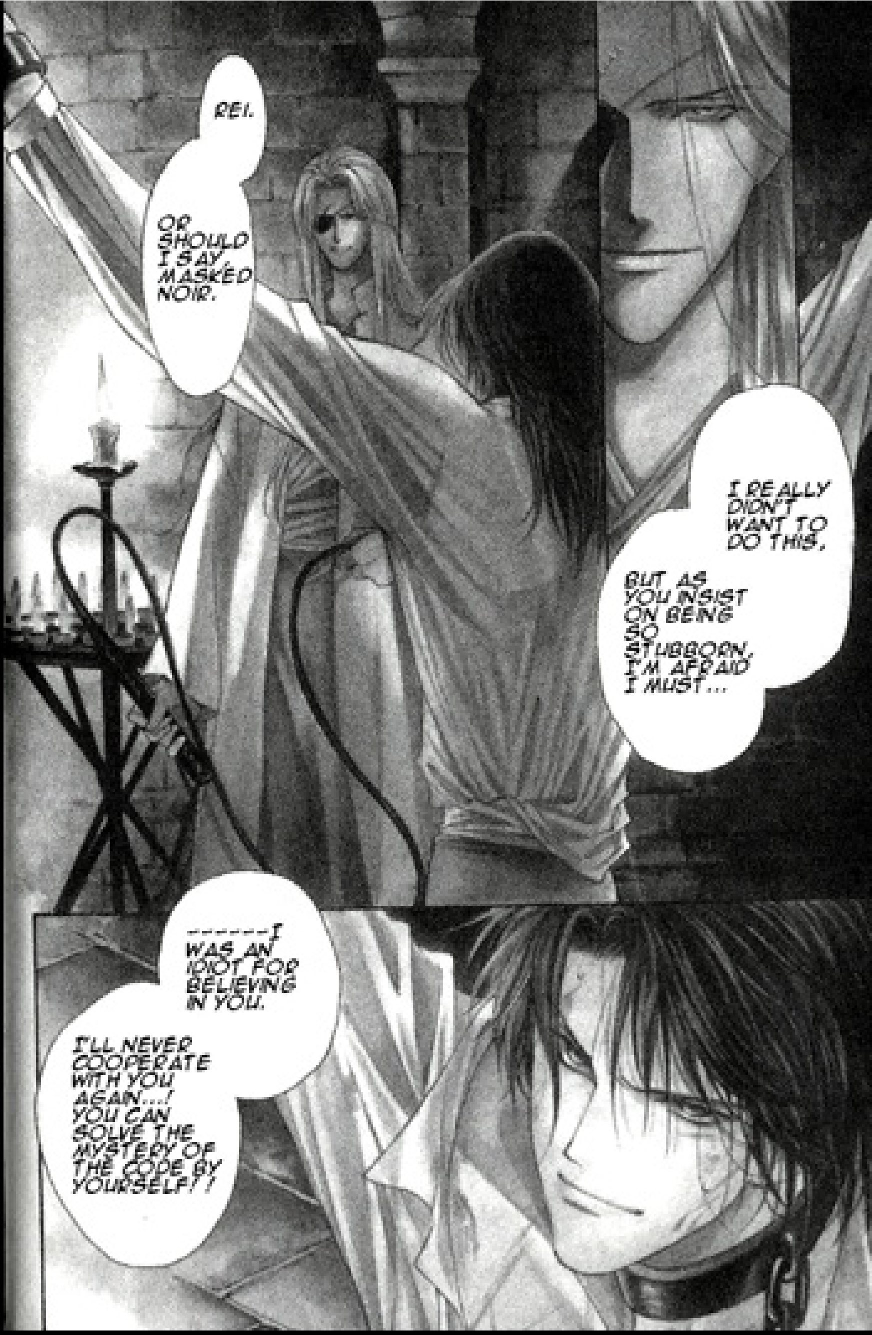
Yaoi factor (9.5/10):

I would have given GC a perfect 10 in this category, if there had been more explicit scenes and more intimate interaction between the lead characters. Granted, a character whipping another character can be read as sensual, and there are panels “suggesting” some bedroom action between some of them but personally, I wished we were shown more intimate nakedness between Noir and Florian; instead of all the hand holding and crying on each other's shoulders. They are the main characters and this is a yaoi manga, so it's not unfair for a fan to ask for some smut between those boys, is it?

Story (8/10):

GC's story has two parts. The earlier part happens in Paris and involves Florian's secret family jewel and how multiple people, including his owner Noir, are trying to find it. It is a nice introduction to most of the characters who will eventually reappear in the second part. The second part of the story, which takes up the larger bulk of the series, sees the characters traveling to Morocco to visit Ray's old friend, Azura. He is a powerful man who is after the treasure that once belonged to the Knight's Templar, which includes the Holy Grail. This is the part that delivers most of the drama and angst in the story and really pulls at the audience's heart strings.

Personally, I love both parts since one involves the rocky relationship between Ray and Florian and the other throws them into the difficulties of overcoming Azura's evil influence. Both parts have their share of angst, torture, naked bishounen and tender moments between the lead boys. The only qualm I have with the story, is that towards the middle of the second part Florian becomes a bit annoying and the angst overflows (Listen to me complain about too much angst. But it's the truth.) Towards the end, when the story veers off from the yaoi and becomes about the hunt for the mysterious treasure, it starts getting a bit boring. Fortunately the dynamic between the three main characters is so well constructed that despite their boring adventures, they still manage to keep the drooling audience interested.


REI.
OR SHOULD I SAY MASKED NOIR.
I REALLY DIDN'T WANT TO DO THIS,
BUT AS YOU INSIST ON BEING SO STUBBORN, I'M AFRAID I MUST...
-------I WAS AN IDIOT FOR BELIEVING IN YOU.
I'LL NEVER COOPERATE WITH YOU AGAIN...! YOU CAN SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF THE CODE BY YOURSELF!!

Overall (9/10):

This is one of the most enjoyable manga I ever read. The art, story and characters are top of the line. The concept is compelling and the execution doesn't disappoint. Aside from a few chapters wasted on treasure hunt and Indiana Jones type adventures – which I'm sure some people would like, the rest of the manga is pure yaoi bliss; with a notable dose of angst that is exactly tailored to a yaoi fan's liking. If Higuri sensei could have read my mind, she couldn't have made this manga better and I consider myself blessed to have been able to own and read such an incredible book.

New scanlation by Aarinfantasy! ✾ New scanlation by Aarinfantasy! ✾ New scanlation by Aarinfantasy!

PINK

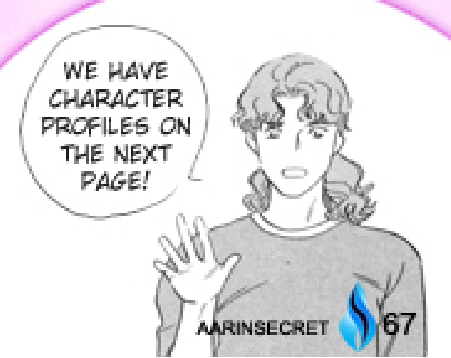
by Satosumi Takaguchi

writers: kurogane & Yavannah
layout: szto

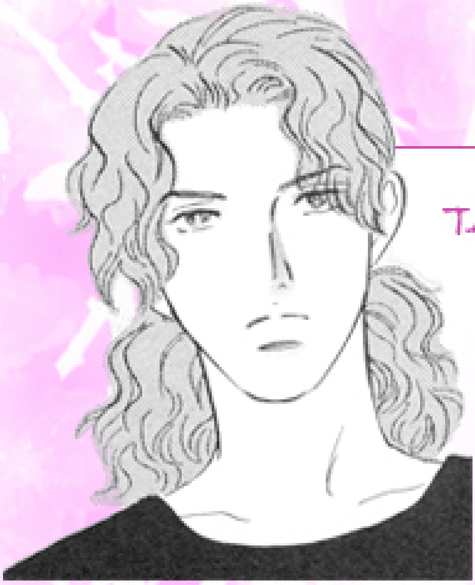
As with all Satosumi Takaguchi's works, Pink boasts a heart-warming, empathic story about the tainting of innocence. This one may not be about angst-ridden high school basketball club members or voice actors but it's just as unique and just as hilarious. And I would go on and on in the same boring tone but I'm going to chuck that out the window right now. Basically Pink isn't your average manga, there are no immediate plot-lacking mind-blowing sex scenes and no "Hello neighbour, want to crash my bed?" pick-up lines. It's a story with a satisfying plot development and the constant underlying reminder that becoming lovers isn't triggered just from the over-bastardized version of love at first sight. It is also the story which warns you not to judge books by their covers or start stereotyping every acquaintance you see.

Pink introduces and revolves around two main characters, Teshima Benio and Usaki Kazuto. Teshima Benio is an adult novelist (this means he writes porn) in search of the ideal artist for his newest, most erotic piece of work called 'Hika'. He's one flashy individual who sports a head of long curly red hair and at face-view, you'd expect him to be snorting cocaine and extorting money from nearby high school students. But he doesn't because all he turns out to be is your friendly uncle next door who can become pretty perverted given the right circumstances. After a bit of searching, Teshima finds his pot of gold in Usaki's Kazuto's art. Usaki's art is exactly what Teshima wants: Outstanding, titillating and mature. He strikes a deal with Usaki or rather his manager, Aoki strikes the deal and Teshima finally meets his artist; only to be floored by surprise because Usaki is the epitome of the high school student you expect Teshima to be extorting from. Contrary to his artwork, Usaki is mild-mannered, gentle-featured and the picture of pure innocence. Teshima struggles with keeping a high schooler as resident artist and throwing out a boy with obvious talent. Ultimately, talent wins and Usaki begins drawing for Hika.

However, the problem kicks in soon after Usaki begins to work for Hika. To Teshima's absolute horror, Usaki's mind is as innocent as he looks and Usaki soon professes that he can't even imagine how lesbian sex could work or why anyone would get high on just being bound S&M style with ropes...
Yet, as Usaki is intent on doing his best as a professional manga artist, what choice has Teshima other than to personally offer Usaki education in sex plays?!

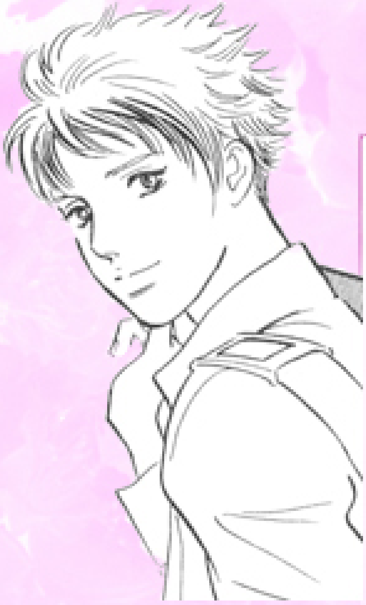

WE HAVE CHARACTER PROFILES ON THE NEXT PAGE!

New scanlation by Aarinfantasy! New scanlation by Aarinfantasy! New scanlation by Aarinfantasy!



Teshima Benio

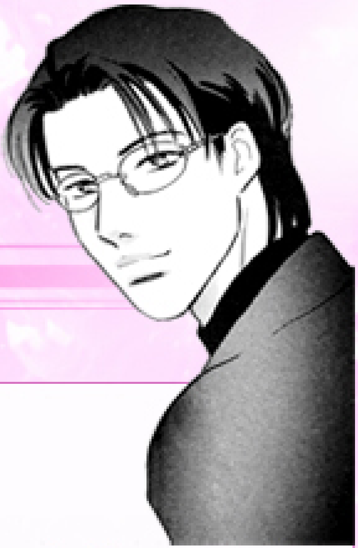
REDHAIRED ADULT NOVELIST AND USAKI'S (RELUCTANT?) INSTRUCTOR.



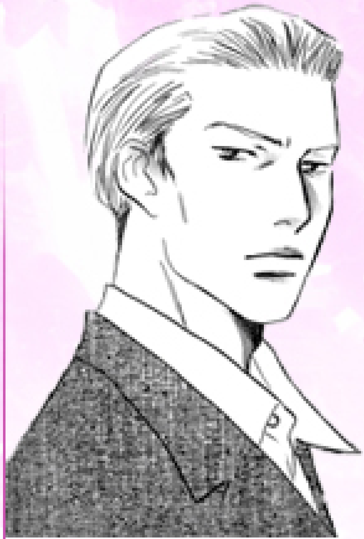
Usaki Kazuto

INNOCENT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WITH CONSIDERABLE TALENT.
NICKNAMED 'BUNNY' BY TESHIMA.
CAN HE LIVE UP TO THE EXPECTATIONS TESHIMA AND HIS MANAGER HAVE OF HIM?

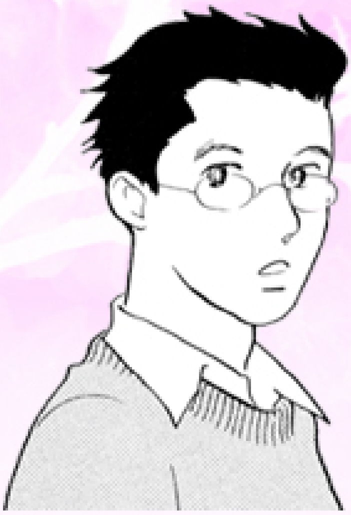
PINK



Sonoi Oto ~ A MANGA ARTIST WHO HAS WORKED WITH TESHIMA ON A PREVIOUS PROJECT. SONOI IS LIKE YOUR BEST FRIEND IN SCHOOL, HE'S THERE FOR ADVICE, SWINGS BOTH WAYS AND HAS REFERENCE HOMO S&M MAGAZINES, QUITE THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF AOKI.



Usaki's Father ~ YOU CAN JUDGE FROM HIS FACE WHAT HE THINKS OF HIS SON BECOMING AN ADULT MANGA ARTIST. (AND YOU CAN ALSO TELL HE'S A CLOSET PERVERT...)



Aoki ~ TESHIMA'S MANAGER AND HIS FRIENDLY PESSIMISTIC CONSCIENCE. HE EXCELS IN GUILT-TRIPPING PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY TESHIMA.

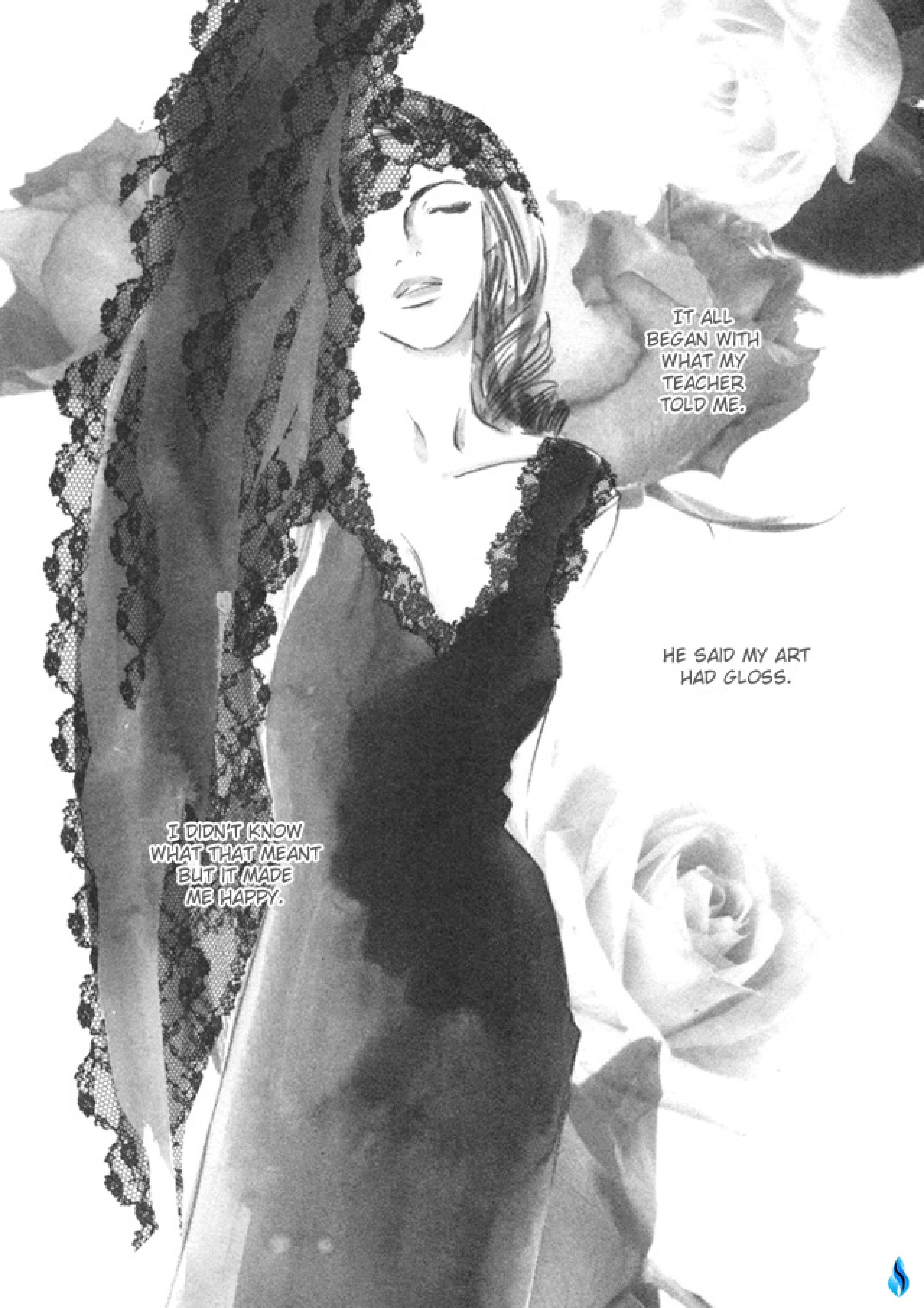
teasers lie ahead

高口里純

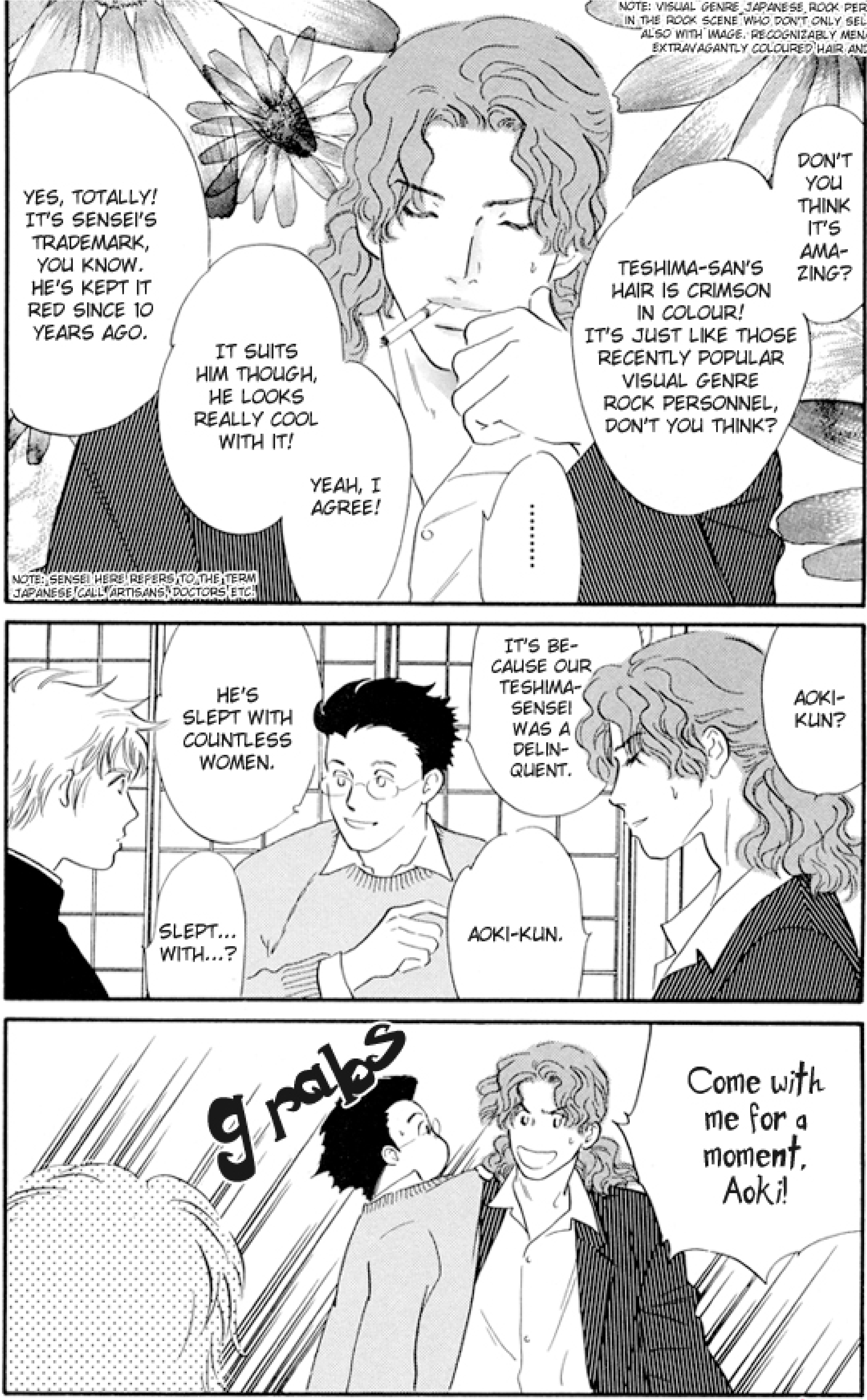
PINK

［ピンク］

1


IT ALL BEGAN WITH WHAT MY TEACHER TOLD ME.
HE SAID MY ART HAD GLOSS.
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANT BUT IT MADE ME HAPPY.

PINK［ピンク］プロット■1


DON'T YOU THINK IT'S AMAZING?
TESHIMA-SAN'S HAIR IS CRIMSON IN COLOUR! IT'S JUST LIKE THOSE RECENTLY POPULAR VISUAL GENRE ROCK PERSONNEL, DON'T YOU THINK?
......
YEAH, I AGREE!
IT SUITS HIM THOUGH, HE LOOKS REALLY COOL WITH IT!
YES, TOTALLY! IT'S SENSEI'S TRADEMARK, YOU KNOW. HE'S KEPT IT RED SINCE 10 YEARS AGO.
AOKI-KUN?
IT'S BECAUSE OUR TESHIMA-SENSEI WAS A DELINQUENT.
AOKI-KUN.
HE'S SLEPT WITH COUNTLESS WOMEN.
SLEPT... WITH...?
Come with me for a moment, Aoki!
grabs

NOTE: VISUAL GENRE JAPANESE ROCK PERSONNEL= PEOPLE IN THE ROCK SCENE WHO DON'T ONLY SELL BY MUSIC BUT ALSO WITH IMAGE. RECOGNIZABLY MEN/WOMEN WITH EXTRAVAGANTLY COLOURED HAIR AND MAKE-UP.

NOTE: SENSEI HERE REFERS TO THE TERM JAPANESE CALL ARTISANS, DOCTORS ETC.

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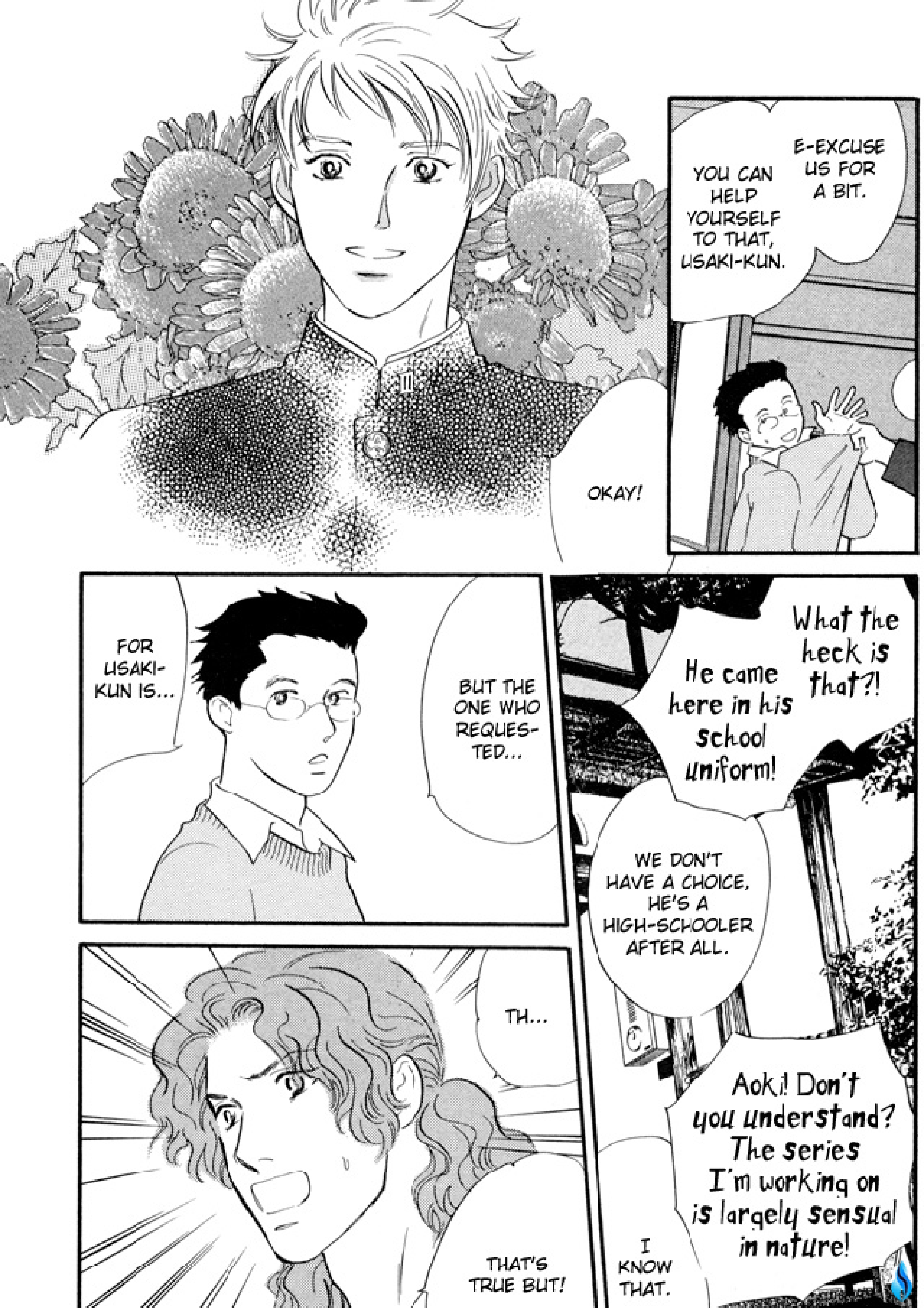
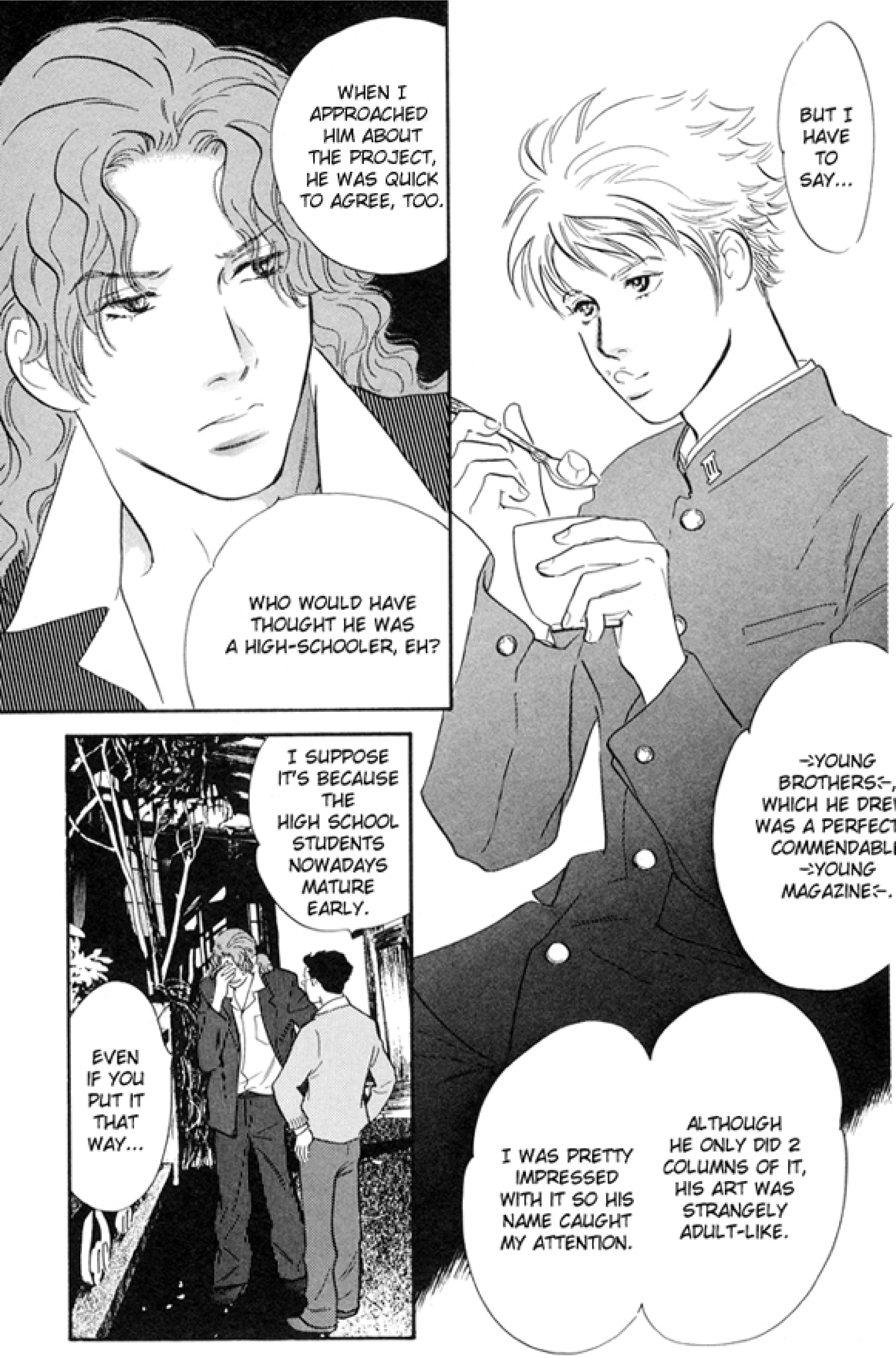

E-EXCUSE US FOR A BIT.
YOU CAN HELP YOURSELF TO THAT, USAKI-KUN.
OKAY!
What the heck is that?!
He came here in his school uniform!
WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE, HE'S A HIGH-SCHOOLER AFTER ALL.
BUT THE ONE WHO REQUESTED...
FOR USAKI-KUN IS...
Aoki! Don't you understand? The series I'm working on is largely sensual in nature!
I KNOW THAT.
TH...
THAT'S TRUE BUT!


BUT I HAVE TO SAY...
⇒YOUNG BROTHERS⇐, WHICH HE DREW, WAS A PERFECTLY COMMENDABLE ⇒YOUNG MAGAZINE⇐.
ALTHOUGH HE ONLY DID 2 COLUMNS OF IT, HIS ART WAS STRANGELY ADULT-LIKE.
I WAS PRETTY IMPRESSED WITH IT SO HIS NAME CAUGHT MY ATTENTION.
WHEN I APPROACHED HIM ABOUT THE PROJECT, HE WAS QUICK TO AGREE, TOO.
WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT HE WAS A HIGH-SCHOOLER, EH?
I SUPPOSE IT'S BECAUSE THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS NOWADAYS MATURE EARLY.
EVEN IF YOU PUT IT THAT WAY...

NOTE: YOUNG SHI/YOUNG MAGAZINE = COMICS THAT MOSTLY HAVE SEXUAL CONTENT.

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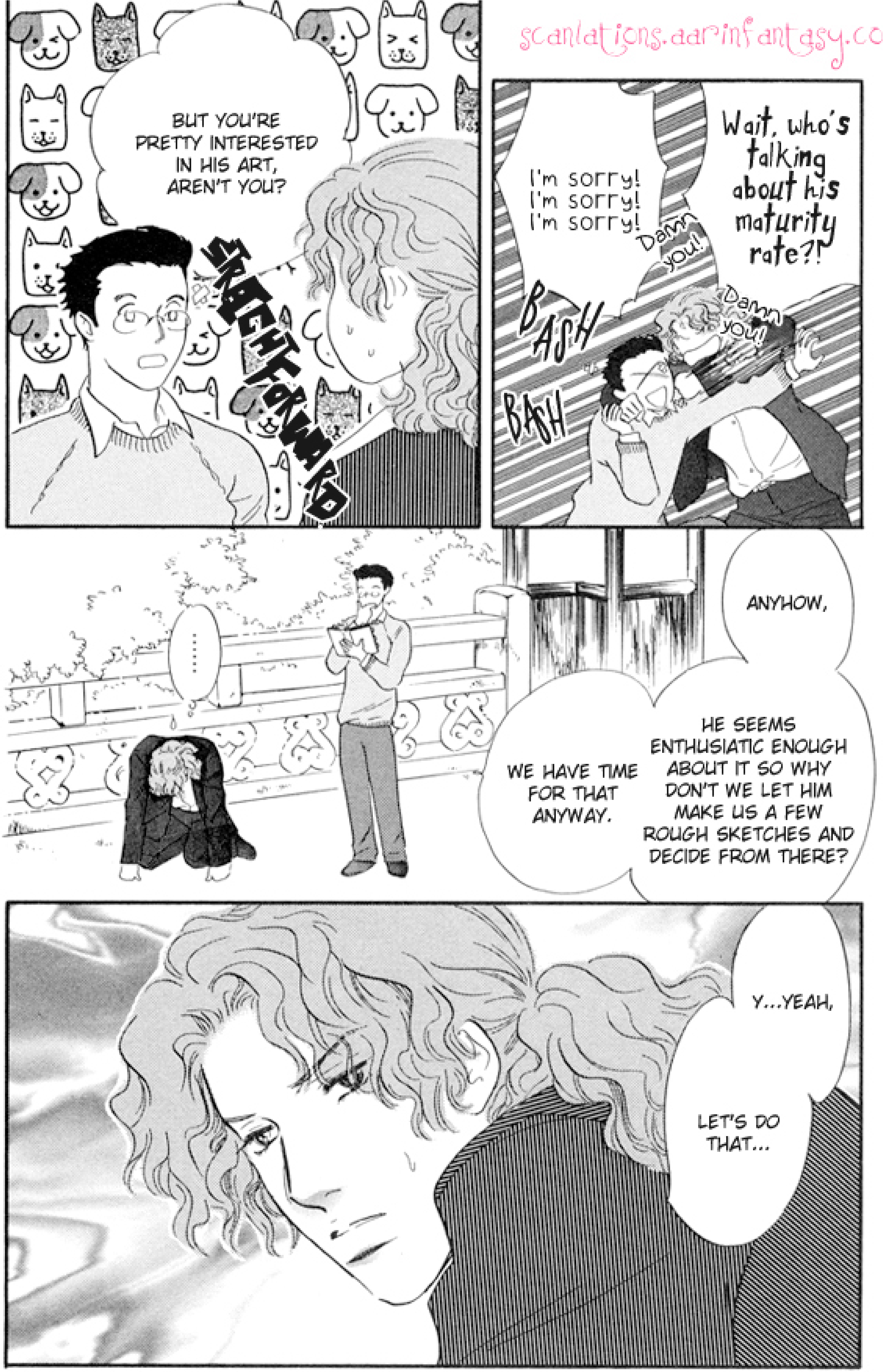
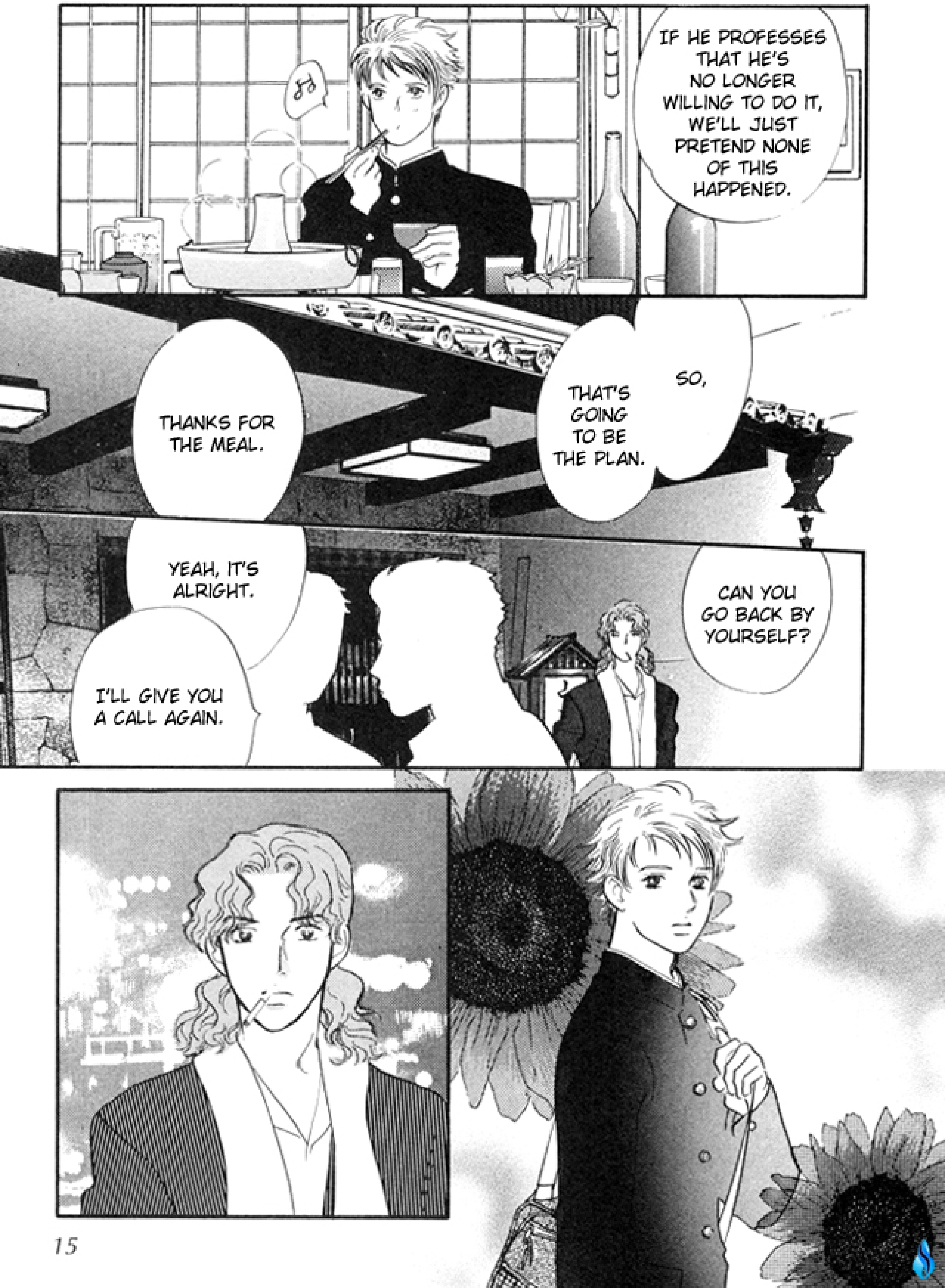
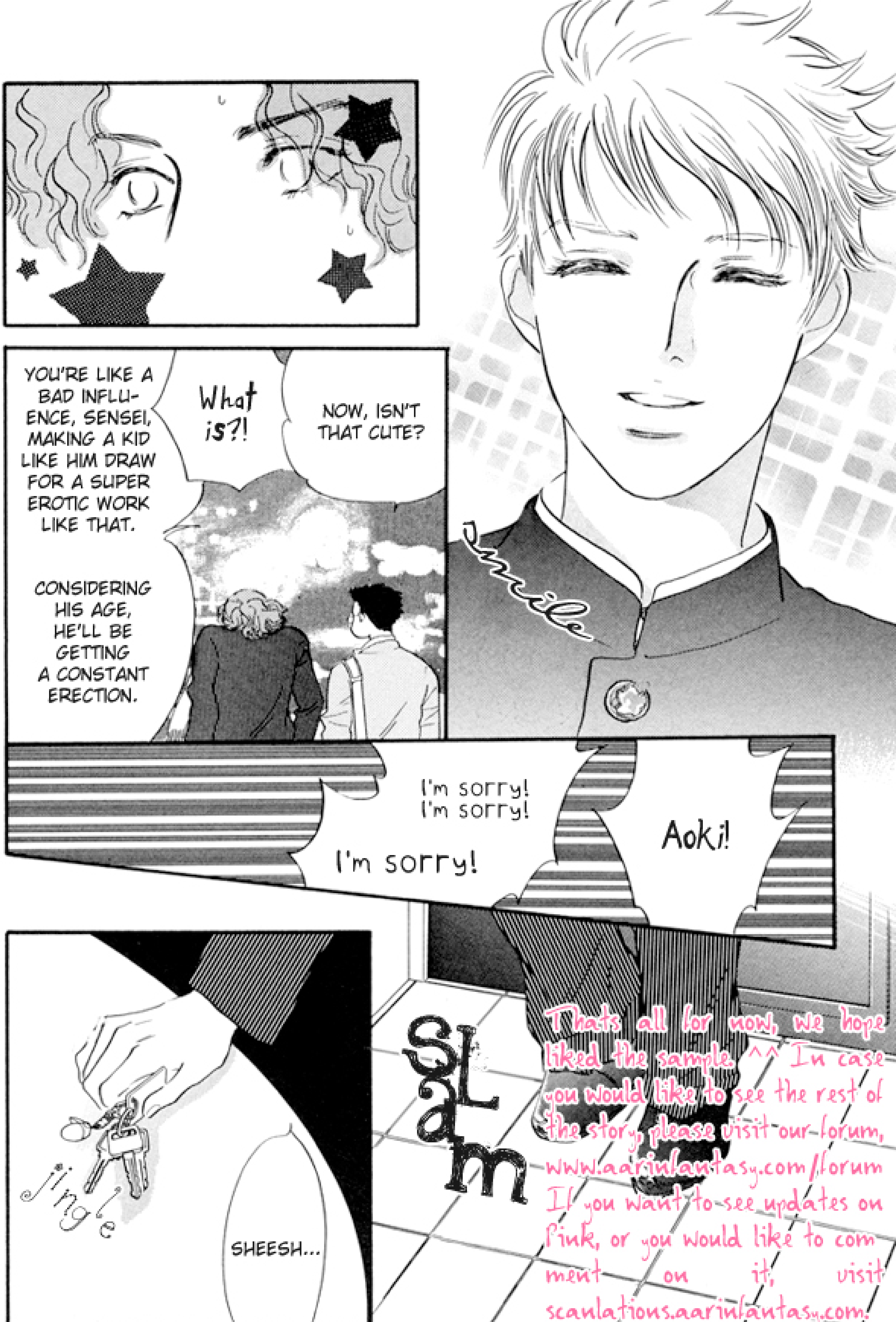

BUT YOU'RE PRETTY INTERESTED IN HIS ART, AREN'T YOU?
SNATCH FORWARD
Wait, who's talking about his maturity rate?!
I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'm sorry!
Damn you!
Damn you!
BASH
BASH
......
ANYHOW,
HE SEEMS ENTHUSIATIC ENOUGH ABOUT IT SO WHY DON'T WE LET HIM MAKE US A FEW ROUGH SKETCHES AND DECIDE FROM THERE?
WE HAVE TIME FOR THAT ANYWAY.
Y...YEAH,
LET'S DO THAT...


IF HE PROFESSES THAT HE'S NO LONGER WILLING TO DO IT, WE'LL JUST PRETEND NONE OF THIS HAPPENED.
SO,
THAT'S GOING TO BE THE PLAN.
THANKS FOR THE MEAL.
CAN YOU GO BACK BY YOURSELF?
YEAH, IT'S ALRIGHT.
I'LL GIVE YOU A CALL AGAIN.


smile
NOW, ISN'T THAT CUTE?
What is?!
YOU'RE LIKE A BAD INFLUENCE, SENSEI, MAKING A KID LIKE HIM DRAW FOR A SUPER EROTIC WORK LIKE THAT.
CONSIDERING HIS AGE, HE'LL BE GETTING A CONSTANT ERECTION.
Aoki!
I'm sorry! I'm sorry!
I'm sorry!
SLAM
SHEESH...
jingle

Thats all for now, we hope liked the sample. ^^ In case you would like to see the rest of the story, please visit our forum, www.aarinfantasy.com/forum If you want to see updates on Pink, or you would like to comment on it, visit scanlations.aarinfantasy.com.
~ See you!

scanlations.aarinfantasy.com

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Bend Your Arms To Look Like Wings

Original Fiction, by _bebe _

I remember the summer before ninth grade when my father took me and my brothers down to Lake Folsom. It was the first time in all fourteen years of my life that I'd ever seen him.

I didn't know much about the man except that he'd left my mother when she was four months pregnant with me and that his child support checks always came late. My oldest brother Elliot hated him and my second oldest brother Nathan used to cry every time parents day came around. I guess I was a different story though, since it's hard to be angry at or miss something when you never had it in the first place. I could've gone on forever not knowing my father and it would've been alright. And I would have too, had it not been for that day when my aunt brought my mom home from the doctor's in tears. I knew that after that day, everything would have to change.

I was right.

*****

My father pulled into our driveway some two years later, right about the time my mother stopped going in for chemotherapy. Nathan was the only one willing to open the door when he knocked. He was much taller than I'd imagined him to be, and looked a little strange standing in our tiny living room. He smiled at the four of us and nodded to me and my brothers, as if he and I had already met once before. My mother had been surprisingly calm throughout the entire exchange. I remember her walking us out to his truck and talking excitedly about how much fun camping would be, all the while twisting sallow fingers through the fabric of her dress, reaching up every now and then to fix the pins on her headscarf. She gave us each a firm kiss on the cheek and then patted our shoulders as we threw our bags into the back of the truck and climbed inside. I remember Elliot squeezing my hand as we pulled out of the driveway, and both of us turning around to watch our mother waving us off.

I can still see her standing at the bottom of our broken driveway, her pale blue dress growing smaller and smaller until we turned the street corner and she disappeared completely.

*****

I'd never been camping before that summer, and a part of me was actually excited about going. My friend Jeff was always telling me stories about the summers his family spent up at their cabin, and how his dad would take him out fishing on his boat. I wondered if it'd be the same for us, even though my father didn't own a cabin or a boat. All he had was a three room "family sized" tent, which took him and Eliot two hours to put up. Nathan and I were in charge of unloading the bed of the truck. It only took us ten minutes to do and since they didn't want our help with the tent, we decided to go have a look at the lake.

The main beach was a short walk from the campgrounds. Dusty towels and crooked umbrella's lined its entire expanse. Men lay sleeping under the shade of umbrellas while wives watched nervously as their children ran hollering up and down the shoreline, bright green buckets and plastic shovels in tow. Nathan elbowed me when two blond girls walked by. One of them looked over at us and rolled her eyes, brushing sand from her sunburned thighs and giggling when the other girl said something to her. Nathan was two years older than me at the time, and his interest in the opposite sex was already well developed, where as mine had never seemed to develop at all. He took their indifference as a challenge and wasted little time introducing himself, using the excuse that he'd lost the "keys to his mustang" somewhere on the beach. I hadn't felt like watching him make an ass out of himself and so I headed off to continue exploring the beach.

I maneuvered my way through a maze of red coolers and inner tubes before at last reaching the shoreline. I kicked off my shoes and stepped into the tide, watching as the water pushed past my ankles and then fell back, leaving my skin glossy and clean where it'd touched. I left my shoes where they lay and started walking along the water's edge. Occasionally I'd reach down to splash water on the tops of my shoulders and the back of my neck where the sun's rays were most unforgiving. My mother had always said that I had my father's skin type. She and my brother's had such fair skin, but mine was darker with a funny redness to it that was always seemed more noticeable during the summer months.

I continued along the shoreline, all the way to where the beach dropped off. The sand beneath my feet turned course and pebbly, and as I moved farther, the sunlight became splotchy under the canopy of trees that lined the water's edge. Their massive roots reached well into the water, covered by a slimy film that made it tricky to walk across.

The sounds of the busy beach became a distant echo as I moved farther into the trees. Eventually I had to strain just to catch what could have been the sound of a child's squeal. I pressed on until I was at least a good 300 hundred feet from the beach. I took a seat on the dry part of a root and propped my head against my knees. A gentle breeze carried the call of a crow from the mountains at my back down to my ears, and for the first time since I'd started walking, I became aware of just how separate from the rest of the world this place was.
I remember closing my eyes and pressing my face against my legs and letting everything else slip away. This place could become mine, I thought. This place, away from the dry beach and all of those tired faces, could belong just to me. Here, I could be away from them.

Here, I could be away from everything.
I could be away from Nathan, and that picture of our father he kept tucked in his pillow. I could be away from Elliot, and that hole he'd punched into our bedroom wall when Mom had told us we'd be moving in with our father once the summer ended. I could be away from Mother and her shrinking face, and the orange pill bottles lined neatly along her bedside table. And I could be away from that man, with skin and eyes like mine, and the uncomfortable silence that awaited me should I return. Here, I could be away from a life that, in all fourteen years of its existence, I'd never once felt any control over.

I think that at that moment, I would of let go completely, had it not been for that sudden, crackling sound of laughter that ran straight through me like an electric shock.
I remember lifting my head up just as the branches above me bowed towards the water with tremendous force. A shadow swung out from the left side and ascended into the sunlight at least twenty feet above the water, and I watched as the shadow became a boy.

He flung his arms out on either side as he let go of the rope he'd been holding onto and for the smallest fraction of a second he hung there, suspended in mid-air.

I remember sucking in my breath just before gravity reclaimed him and he fell back down to earth. He fell hard too, and the force of his body sent shock waves ripping across the water's surface, all the way to the edge of the root I was sitting on.

The boy disappeared under the water's surface for a full 7 seconds before shooting back up. He shook the water from his hair and gave another sharp laugh that echoed against my chest. Then he turned in my direction and squinted, and I knew that he'd seen me.
My body went stiff as he paddled towards me. He reached the bottom of the root I was sitting on and used it to steady himself as he waded up to the shore. He looked to be about my height, and I could tell by the shape of his shoulders that he was about my age as well. " Hey", he said, and I remember thinking how much lighter his voice was in comparison to his laugh.

" Hey", I answered, suddenly wanting to seem cool and uncaring, just like Nathan had acted with the two blonds.
"What's you're name?", he asked.
"J.M.", I answered.
" J.M. ?", he said, and I could tell he was still a little out of breath from swimming. " Is that short for something?".
" No, it's just J.M.", I lied. My mother had always abbreviated my name, and the only time she'd call me by my full name was when I was in trouble. It never bothered me though, since I liked going by J.M. . It sounded cooler than Jeremy Morgan. Morgan was too much of a girl's name.
" What's yours?", I asked.
"Anthony" he said. He coughed and spat, wringing the water from his shorts. " Hey", he asked, " you wanna come jump with me, J.M. ?".
"Uh… sure", I answered.

I followed him up into the tree and all the way out onto one of its thickets limbs. A rope dangled from an equally sturdy branch above. Anthony grabbed it and held it out to me. "Here, you can go first".
I think he could tell I'd never done it before because he laughed suddenly, forcing the rope into my hand. "Don't worry, I'll show you how".

I nodded and stepped farther out towards him, squeezing the rope until my knuckles turned white. "Here", he said, placing his hand over mine to loosen my grip. He took my other hand and spaced them both out on the rope. This was the closest I'd been to him, and I kept stealing glances at his face whenever his eyes were turned away from mine. He leaned in at one point to adjust my arms and I could smell the lake on his skin, alive and pulsing and warm.

The more he talked me through the process, the more at ease I felt until finally I was ready to jump. Anthony stepped back and before I knew it, I was sailing through the air. I watched the water appear beneath me as I reached the jumping point. I could hear Anthony calling out to me, " Let go, Let go!".
I let the rope slip from my fingers and my body continued moving forward. I threw my arms out wide, just as I'd seen Anthony do, but with far less grace and I hit the water in a disjointed mess. I hadn't been prepared for the shock of the water as it filled my nose and mouth and I broke the surface coughing and sputtering like a drowned cat.

Anthony's laughter boomed down from the trees. It echoed against the mountains, surrounding me with its power. I realized then that it didn't matter if I went by J.M. or Jeremy Morgan. I'd just made a complete fool of myself, and Anthony had been witness to the entire thing.
I was about to swim back when I heard the familiar swish of leaves and Anthony came swinging out from the tree. He came close to landing on me, burying me in the waves of his impact. When I came back up, he was already bobbing up and down, looking over at me with a cheesy grin.
Had it been one my friends or either of my brothers, I would have gone for their throats. But something about Anthony made me feel differently, and pretty soon I was grinning back at him, caught up once again in his wild laughter.

*****

We continued swinging, and eventually I started to improve, though I was never as good as Anthony. He was always testing the limits of the tree, swinging harder and farther with each turn. Sometimes he'd do a flip, or dive in head first and not come back up for what felt like ages. It made my stomach clench with a sort of nervous excitement every time he'd disappear under the water, and the feeling would linger even after he'd come back up.

I remember lying side by side on our backs in the damp dirt that made up our tiny little beach. The afternoon sun dappled through the leaves above and moved across our heaving chests, still slick with lake water.
" You come to Folsom a lot?", Anthony had suddenly asked.
"No… this is my first time" , I replied. " My dad brought me and my brothers down here for the week".
" Why?", he asked, and I had thought it strange even then the way he'd said it.
"Because… he's trying to get to know us".
Anthony tilted his head to the side, peering over at me. " He doesn't know you?".
"No, he doesn't…".
I hadn't once thought about my father or the real reason I was at the lake the entire time I'd been with Anthony. I hadn't wanted really wanted to talk about it either, but I had this feeling that maybe Anthony would understand. Or, maybe, I'd just wanted him to understand. Either way, I ended up telling him more than I'd ever told anyone.

"… He left my mom when she was still pregnant with me. He'd always send us birthday presents and stuff, but he'd never come to visit. The only reason he's trying to bond with us now is because my mom's dying, and we'll have to move in with him once school starts".

Anthony got quiet for awhile, and I suddenly wondered if I'd made a mistake telling him.
"What's wrong with your mom?", he asked, breaking the silence between us.
"She has breast cancer", I said. " She was in remission for a full year before it returned. The doctors want her to go through surgery again… but, I can tell she doesn't want to…". I dug my hands into the dirt as I said this, concentrating on the way it felt as pushed under my nails. I would have rather died than let Anthony see that I was getting upset.

"I had an uncle who had cancer ", he said, almost out of no where. " Didn't have any kids though--just a cat".

I turned to him suddenly, not expecting him to already be looking at me. His eyes sparkled as he gave me another funny grin. They were bright green, just like the surface of the lake, and there was something almost tangible about the way the light caught his irises, like I could reach my hand forward and splash it away.
I was so used to the sympathetic answers most people gave that I was caught off guard by Anthony's oddball remark, and I ended up forgetting I was supposed to be upset.

The conversation switched over to him, and I found out that he was fourteen too, and that his stepfather had a cabin on the other side of the lake. They were having friends over for a barbeque but Anthony had gotten bored, so he'd snuck away to come swinging. He'd found out about the swing just two summers ago, and didn't know how long it'd been there before then. "… When I'm older, I want to build a cabin of my own right by this tree…", he said. " I'll even build a platform on the branch; that way I can swing out farther".
" Would you let me come visit?", I asked, hoping like hell he'd say yes.

" Better yet", he said, sitting up to look out over the water, " you could help me build it. We could share the cabin--bring our friends down in August and have parties--that kinda stuff".
" Yeah", I agreed, sitting up as well.
I didn't tell him that I'd rather it was just us there, in that imaginary cabin, but the thought of it still made me happy. I wanted to believe that it would happen, that our friendship wouldn't end after that week. We talked for another hour before Anthony finally had to leave. We promised to meet back up the next day, right at that same spot.

****

The beach crowd had grown sparse by the time I returned, and I hurried along the dusty road towards our campsite. Nathan and my father were standing over near the picnic table, trying to set up his propane stove. Elliot was seated on log by the fire pit. They all looked up at me as I approached.

" Where've you been, Jeremy?", Elliot asked suddenly, sounding a lot like our mother. " Nathan said you disappeared down at the beach".
" Calm down, Elliot", I said as I took a seat on the log beside him. " I didn't fell like watching Nate hit on girls, so I went for a walk. No big deal; really".
My father suddenly spoke up. "… It's alright if you want to go off, Jeremy… just tell one of us where you're going beforehand, okay?".
" Yeah… sure", I said. It felt strange hearing him act concerned, and I had to remind myself that this was father.

Eventually he and Nathan got the stove to work, and we all sat down together to a dinner of burnt hot dogs and lukewarm beans. My father and Elliot were more at ease with each other than they had been, and I remember Elliot even laughed a couple of times as they explained how they managed to finally get the tent up. My father tried to ask me some questions about school, and I found out that we'd both been terrible in math. Anyone who saw us that night probably wouldn't of know that this was our first time together like that.
The whole thing was almost surreal.

It was as if I really had stepped into some separate world when I'd left the beach and found that tree, and Anthony. I felt like I'd been away for years instead of hours, and that so much had changed in the time before my return.

I think that that was the first time I started to wonder if maybe my mother wasn't sending us off to live with our father just because she had to. It wasn't until three years later that I found out our aunt had offered to take us, but that my mother had refused because my father had already said he would. I think she knew better than any of us then what I didn't until that night.
This man with eyes and skin like mine wasn't taking us in because he had to; he was doing it because he wanted to.

I don't remember if I liked the food or not, but I do remember eating all of it, and laughing when Nathan dropped his plate in his lap.
I'm sure Anthony would of laughed at that too.

*****

The days that followed were some of the best days of my life, and that summer was the predecessor of the summers to come. Not a year went by after that summer that me and my brother's didn't beg our father to take us down to Folsom, and when my mother went into remission a second time, she came down with us. I think I was the one who looked forward to it the most, because to me, summer meant another week of freedom. Summer meant escape. Summer meant happiness. Summer meant Anthony.

I would always hurry through breakfast just so I could get down to the tiny beach, where Anthony would be waiting. At first we'd spent most of our time swinging for our tree, but eventually our attention moved towards other tasks. We'd take Anthony's kayak and explore the farthest reaches of the lake's perimeter. We even found other rope swings, but we never really used them, always returning to our own. That was just the way it came to be for us.

The way everything came to be for us.
We'd say goodbye at the end of each summer and then drift off on our own separate paths, always somehow returning to that same place because we knew the other would be right there waiting once summer came back around again.

I remember my sophomore year; the same year me and Anthony finally got around to building a platform for our swing. It was ugly as hell, and the wood was mismatched and ill cut, but we made it work. I remember standing back to admire our work, and feeling the most accomplished I had in my all life. Anthony had just grinned back at me and smiled, all to eager to try it out. We didn't stop swinging until the sun was already halfway below the mountains and the water had lost its crystalline shimmer. A warm breeze picked up and me and Anthony knew we couldn't pass up the opportunity that night promised us. It was the first night we spent under our tree, and it was also the first time I realized my attraction to him wouldn't go away.
I had been so horribly nervous, sitting beside him at the water's edge and skipping rocks in the dark. My heart was in my throat as I contemplated the possibility of telling him right then and there, and the inevitable reaction I was doomed to receive. Keeping my mouth shut was the safest and easiest option, I knew, but it was also the one that left me feeling the worst when yet another summer passed me by. I knew that, if I didn't tell him then, I'd have to wait another year before that chance came again, and who knew what might happen in that time. I had decided that it had to be that summer, and it had to be that night.
" Hey, Anthony…?", I said in a shaky sort of way that couldn't be described as anything but teenage and pathetic.

Anthony had stopped skipping rocks to look over at me. The small lantern behind us gave off just enough light to keep us from tripping over ourselves, but not enough to see anything else. I felt Anthony's arm push up against mine as he asked, "Yeah? What is it?".
I swallowed hard, repeating the next words over and over until I felt that I could say them. "… There's something I think I need to say… and if it creeps you out, or you don't feel the same, then I'll understand, but… I just need to tell you… okay?".
" Okay", Anthony said, " What is it?". He said it so simply, and I was a little jealous of just how calm he seemed to be. I was risking everything in telling him, and he was probably going to have yet another laugh at my expense.

If only I'd known then what I know now…
"… Anthony… what would you say--I mean, what would you think if… if… I were to tell you that I… I….".
The awkward stutter in my voice began to spread through the rest of my body, and I suddenly felt weak and dizzy. It was both incredibly freighting and unbelievably exiting as I finally worked up the nerve to finish my sentence. "… what would you say if I told you that… I thought of you as more than… just a friend…".
I dug my hands into the pockets of my jeans, thankful Anthony couldn't see the redness I'm almost certain must've been burning across my face as I waited for his laughter to follow. That thick, booming laugh that usually made me feel whole would tear me in half if I heard it now.

I waited…
And I waited…
And I waited still…
And finally, unable to bare it any longer, I turned to face him.

I couldn't see his face and at first I thought maybe he was angry, and so I fumbled for something to say. I was ready to laugh it off as a joke and bury the words deep beneath the lake, right along with the foolish hope that he'd actually be okay with it. At that moment all I wanted was for him to not hate me, or take away the friendship I'd come to depend on as much as I did breathing.

But, before I could say anything, Anthony's hand had found its way to mine.

My heart jumped into my throat and I froze. I felt the heat of his skin as he leaned in, and his scent filled my senses. I couldn't see anything beyond the dim lines of his silhouette as he leaned the rest of the way in and in an instant, his lips were on mine.

At that moment, all I could think about was the very first time I'd jumped from our tree. I'd been nervous and scared at first, but the moment I'd let go and felt myself not falling, but hovering--flying--I'd almost forgotten to breath. That kiss was like letting go of the rope.

Anthony pulled away slowly, and I could feel the smile on his lips as he did.

"… Does that answer your question?", was all he said to me.

*****

It's almost June now, and my junior year has just come to its end. My friend Richard wanted me to come with him and bunch of his other friends to Mexico for a week. I probably would've agreed, had it not fallen on the same week as our now annual trip to Folsom.

"You sure you don't want to come?", he asked again. " Mallory's going to come, and I know she'd like if you were there".

" I told you, I can't".

" But come on man, camping with your family ? Wouldn't you rather come with us?".

" It's kind of a tradition though… and I've never missed a year since we started going".

"Fine then… it's your loss".

I tried not smile as he said this, because I'm sure he would've misinterpreted it.

That's because he doesn't know--he's never felt the way I do when I'm around Anthony. All year long, I've been living off that one kiss, and I can still feel it now. That weightless sensation still appears in my stomach, making me dizzy with anticipation whenever I think about the approaching week.

It's strange to think that even at fourteen, I knew that summer would mean change. But I don't think I could have ever guessed that that change would actually come to be for the better, or that I'd have my father to thank for it.

Little by little, things are still getting better.

And, as long as I have Anthony and the lake, I know I'll be okay with whatever comes my way.

*****The End*****

Scanlation Group: AYAOI

FOUNDED BY ZILA-CHAN, AYAOI IS A SCANLATION GROUP DEDICATED TO TRANSLATE YAOI, SHONEN-AI AND SHOUJO MANGAS FROM ENGLISH-FRENCH-JAPANESE-CHINESE-ETC TO SPANISH.

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SUMMER STORM

Author: meicdon13
Fan-fiction of Saiyuki
Pairings: Sanzo x Kougaiji
Kougaiji x Sanzo

Kouryuu ran through the dark forest. Thunder sounded and lighting flashed overhead but it hadn't started raining yet. The young monk hoped to reach Kinzan Temple before the downpour began. The sky slowly grew darker.

He leapt over a large fallen branch but landed awkwardly, his foot slipping on a moss-covered rock. He fell to the forest floor, grunting in pain when he felt his shoulder hit something hard. Kouryuu winced as he saw his blood begin to seep through his robes.

With a loud clap of thunder, it began to rain; heavy sheets of cold water drenching him and plastering his hair against his cheeks.

Mumbling under his breath about bald monks who were too lazy to buy supplies from the village even though it was their responsibility to do so, he picked up the bag of food that he dropped when he fell and made his way towards a small cave nearby. The blond decided that it would be better to wait out the sudden storm.

Reaching the mouth of the cave, Kouryuu was about to enter when a flash of lightning illuminated the cave. Kouryuu froze in fear, one foot inside while the rest of his body was pounded by the rain.

There was a youkai inside trying to build a fire. Since he was dry he probably entered the cave before the downpour began. Though the youkai had his back to the cave entrance, Kouryuu knew that he was aware of the blond's presence. The smell of his blood alone was enough to give him away.

I'm going to die, Kouryuu thought calmly. He'll turn around and grab me then he'll kill me for the food in the bag.

"Aren't you going to come in?"

The voice snapped Kouryuu out of his thoughts. The youkai had succeeded in lighting the fire and was now glancing over his shoulder at him.

"Aren't you going to come in?" the youkai repeated patiently. "It's raining and you're soaked, not to mention cold."

Still not moving in case he triggered some sort of hunting reflex, Kouryuu simply stared at the youkai. Then, realizing that he might anger him if he didn't answer, he spoke carefully. "Why should I trust you? You're probably going to kill me."

"If I wanted to kill you, you'd be dead by now." The youkai went back to tending the fire.

Kouryuu weighed his options. He could leave and try to find shelter somewhere else—probably getting even colder and wetter in the process—or he could stay in the cave where he could dry off and wait out the storm.

Even with his advanced spiritual powers, he couldn't detect any malicious intent from the youkai. Deciding that he would rather die after getting comfortable by a fire than die by catching pneumonia, Kouryuu entered the cave and sat down warily, never taking his eyes off the youkai in case he made any sudden moves.

The youkai had long maroon hair that cascaded down his back. His tanned skin seemed to glow in the light of the fire. But it was the youkai's eyes that grabbed Kouryuu's attention.

His eyes were a delicate lilac color, the pupils shaped like a cat's as they tried to drink in all available light. They seemed so intense, as if he were thinking of a heavy burden on his shoulders. They seemed infinitely sad.

"You should take care of your injury," the youkai said, once again interrupting Kouryuu's train of thought. "Not all youkai are like me and they might pick up the scent of your blood."

When the young monk didn't respond, the youkai continued. "Not to mention wild animals that might eat you if they caught your scent."

After a few more seconds with no reply from the blond, the youkai stood up and walked over towards Kouryuu, squatting down in front of him with a sigh.

After finally getting over the initial shock of having the youkai so close, Kouryuu managed to react when he felt hands opening his robes. "What are you doing?" he shouted, swatting away tanned hands.

The redhead frowned as he grabbed Kouryuu's wrists, holding them in a firm grip but not injuring the young monk.

"Look, I can't afford having some random youkai picking up your scent, following it here, and finding me. Now, it's either you bandage your injury, let me do it for you, or I throw you out of the cave." His lilac eyes locked onto Kouryuu's purple ones. "Do you understand?"
Kouryuu shot him a look of mixed fear and defiance but nodded. The youkai sighed—in relief?—and moved Kouryuu's robes off one shoulder. The blond felt exposed while the redhead tended to his wound. The youkai removed a piece of lilac cloth that was threaded through two silver hoops on the shoulders of his leather jacket and used it as a sort of makeshift bandage.

Kouryuu winced when the youkai tied a tight knot. He saw a flash of lilac when the redhead glanced up at him before checking the bandage one more time.
"Sorry," he said, walking back to his spot on the other side of the fire.
He paused before sitting down and took off his jacket, tossing it towards Kouryuu. "You'd better take off your wet clothes and let them dry by the fire." He gestured at the leather jacket. "You can wear that in the meantime."

Kouryuu picked up the offered garment and looked up to check if the youkai was peeking. When he saw that the redhead still had his back to him, he quickly took off his wet robes and put on the jacket. It was almost up to mid-thigh and covered less of his legs than his robes but he decided to put up with it instead of getting sick.
"Thank you," he said softly. He felt like he owed it to the youkai to at least show appreciation for all the things he had done for him. The only person who had even shown him any kindness was Komyou Sanzo and now here was a total stranger who not only tended to his wounds but also kept him safe and dry from the storm. It was…strange.

He stared out at the raindrops falling outside the cave. The storm was still going strong and it didn't look like it was letting up any time soon. Kouryuu sighed and crossed his arms as he leaned against the wall of the cave.
Why is it even raining this hard? The thought popped into his head as he watched the drops of water falling to earth. It's summer, it's supposed to be hot, not wet.
As if he were reading Kouryuu's mind, the youkai spoke up from his spot. "It's a summer storm. It happens sometimes. Suddenly it'll rain and you'll be caught in the downpour."
"How long before it let's up?" Kouryuu asked softly.

"I don't know. It varies. It could last all night; it hasn't rained in this area for months and all the water that evaporated will come crashing down to earth."
Kouryuu's hand accidentally brushed against his paper bag. It was full of fruits and it reminded him that he was hungry. Deciding that one fruit wouldn't really matter when he got back to the temple, he took an apple from the bag and bit into it.

The youkai looked up from across the fire then bowed his head again. Blushing a little when he realized that he didn't offer the redhead any food, he took another apple from the bag and walked over to the youkai.
"Want one?" he asked. A simple 'thank you' seemed inadequate for the redhead's kindness and giving away the monks' food was another way to get back at them for making him go out in the first place.
The redhead looked up at Kouryuu and took the offered apple with a simple, "Thanks." He bit into it and started chewing, watching the flames, the fire reflected in his lilac eyes. He then looked back up at Kouryuu.
"Did you want something?" he asked curiously.

The blond realized that he was still standing and watching the youkai eat. "Nothing," he replied and quickly walked back to his side of the fire. He ate the rest of his apple in silence and pointedly looked anywhere but the youkai. What was wrong with him? He was about to throw the apple core outside but a hand caught his wrist and took it away from him.

"Another youkai might see it and come here," he said. "Didn't I tell you that I didn't want anyone to find me?"
The youkai threw the core into the fire and added his own after he finished. Then he sat down beside Kouryuu, between the blond and the cave entrance.

A nervous thrill shot up Kouryuu's spine. Was the youkai going to kill him now? Did he sit there to prevent him from escaping? He was sitting so close that he could feel the redhead's body heat even through the jacket, could feel a few strands of the silky maroon hair brushing against his fingertips if he moved his hand a little.
"Don't move," the youkai said softly, barely above a whisper. "There's something out there." He placed a hand on the young monk's shoulder to emphasize his staying put.
Kouryuu almost stopped breathing. If the redhead was killed, then he would be a goner too. He pressed himself against the cave wall, trying to make himself as small as possible. He was barely ten-years-old, he highly doubted that he could face any youkai; he was pretty damn lucky that the one who was sitting beside him wasn't a killer.

After a few minutes of tense silence, the redhead removed his hand from Kouryuu's shoulder and sighed. "It's gone."
They spent the next few moments just sitting there, alternately watching the rain and the fire.
"So," the youkai said, breaking the silence. "What's a little human boy like you doing out here in the forest at night?"
"I'm a monk in training," Kouryuu replied. "And since I'm an orphan, the other monks usually pass on their jobs to me if they're feeling too lazy to do them. I don't really have any choice but to do what they say." He hugged his legs, trying to keep warm. If anything, the storm had grown stronger and the fire wasn't being much help since it was slowly dying and they had no wood to add to it.
"Why don't you just run away then?" the youkai asked.

"Because Sanzo-sama rescued me from the river when I was a baby and he's the only person I'll ever believe in." Kouryuu felt a bit foolish but kept talking, afraid that the youkai could tell if he lied to him. "And he's the closest thing to a father that I'll ever have."
Suddenly embarrassed, Kouryuu rested his chin on his knees and looked at the fire; away from the youkai. He felt a hand place itself on top of his head but didn't pull away. It was strange…strange the way this youkai could give off the same feeling of comfort that Sanzo-sama did. The way he could make him feel safe and special. It was strange…but not unwelcome.

"I never really knew my father," the youkai said, his hand still on top of Kouryuu's head. The blond didn't bother looking at the redhead, but listened closely instead. "When I was little, I spent all my time with my mother. She was…beautiful." The youkai's voice grew wistful, softer…sadder. "She was always there for me, always keeping me safe, always making me smile when I cried."

The hand on top of Kouryuu's head began to move; stroking the golden strands, nails gently scraping his scalp. It seemed as if the actions were done absentmindedly, as if thoughts of his mother brought out a gentler side in the redheaded youkai.

Silence reigned in the cave once again. It was the comfortable kind of silence; the kind between friends or lovers who don't feel the need to talk, their presence enough for the moment.
Kouryuu shivered, the cold finally getting to him as a particularly strong gust of wind blew into the cave, bringing cold water along with it and killing the fire.

The youkai cursed, throwing up his arm as a shield to protect his face from the spray and using his body to shield Kouryuu. When the wind died down, he shook his head, sending drops flying everywhere.
"Damn," he said in annoyance. "We'd better move farther into the cave."

They settled somewhere near the back of the cave, which wasn't really very far since the cave wasn't large to begin with. By this time, Kouryuu was shivering uncontrollably. He hugged himself tighter, wishing he could put on his robes beneath the leather jacket for added warmth but it was still wet.

"Here," the youkai said, placing an arm around him and pulling him close. Kouryuu's eyes widened at the sudden contact. The youkai shifted a little and Kouryuu found himself in a much more comfortable position; leaning against the redhead's side, head resting on the youkai's chest.

Though he was unused to such close contact with anyone, he found the warmth from the youkai's body comforting. Coupled with the tiring run he had in the forest earlier, the blond began relaxing into his cozy position. Kouryuu found himself slowly slipping into slumber, the steady rise and fall of the redhead's chest along with the strong heartbeat in his ears lulling him into sleep.

The next thing he felt were hands shaking him. A voice was speaking too. "Kouryuu! Wake up!"

I don't remember telling him my name… Kouryuu opened bleary purple eyes, expecting to see lilac ones staring back at him. Instead, he saw Shuei, one of the monks, looking at him with a worried expression on his face. He was lying on the ground in front of the Kinzan Temple and it was morning already.

"Sanzo-sama's been worried sick about you," Shuei said, helping the young monk to his feet. "Did you spend the night outside? In the rain?"

"I did," Kouryuu said. Something inside of him told him not to tell anyone what really happened last night. "When I got here, the temple gates were already locked for the night and the storm drowned out my shouts."

After they ate a hearty breakfast, Shuei told Kouryuu that the storm had stopped some time after midnight. The youkai must have carried the blond to the temple after the storm stopped and then left.

When the older monk went off to call Sanzo-sama, Kouryuu placed a hand beneath his robes and touched the lilac cloth around his shoulder. He felt himself blush when he realized that the youkai had taken off the jacket and put his robes back on him.

It had been a very strange night. And for some reason, it had also been a special night. And because it was both strange and special, Kouryuu decided that it would be much better if he simply…forgot all about it.

xxx

Another unbearably hot summer. Another day nearing an end. Another sudden summer storm.

Sanzo was standing in the rain, staring off into the distance. He was on top of a hill, the village where their group was staying in the valley below him. He had been thinking about the events of that day; the lilac-haired youkai assassin that had pretended to be a waitress and ambushed them, the way Hakkai had faced off with her, the assassin's suicide attempt, and the maroon-haired youkai that had stopped her.

Kougaiji-sama, she had called him.

And then Sanzo saw his eyes. They were…lilac.

When the rain had started, Sanzo cursed but decided that finding shelter would be pointless.

"It's a summer storm. It happens sometimes."

Sanzo shook his head, trying to get rid of the voice that suddenly spoke inside his head. Something else was bothering him as well, something that happened during another summer storm more than ten years ago.

"Good evening, Genjo Sanzo Houshi," a voice said from behind him.

Sanzo whirled around, shoureiju aimed at whoever spoke. He found himself looking at Kougaiji, the youkai prince.

The redhead smirked. "Didn't I tell you that you couldn't kill me with that?"

"Don't try me, youkai," Sanzo snapped. "What do you want?"

"I just wanted to enjoy the view." Kougaiji shrugged. "I didn't even know you were here until I was just behind that tree; the rain makes it difficult to pick up scents."

Like earlier that day, Sanzo couldn't sense any malicious intent from the redhead. Slowly lowering his gun, he turned his back on the youkai, looking out at the view again.

Kougaiji approached the monk and stood beside him. He folded his arms across his chest and tilted his head back, letting the raindrops hit his face. "I don't suppose you kept it?"

"Kept what?" Sanzo asked. "What are you talking about?"

"I didn't think you'd forget about it…but what was I supposed to expect?" Kougaiji turned around and began to walk away. He paused after a few steps. "I wasn't sure at first if it was really you, but when I caught your scent, I was." He began to walk again.

Sanzo's eyes widened as memories began flooding into his mind, as if they were waiting for this exact moment to happen.

Before he knew it, he had turned around and spoke to Kougaiji's retreating back. "Once, when I was cold, you put your arm around me and kept me warm." He saw the redhead stop, almost half-turning around. "It's cold, Kougaiji," he said, voice barely audible above the pounding rain.

Kougaiji smiled. It seemed…sad. "You're not a little boy anymore, Sanzo."

He walked away.

*** THE END ***

n0rth_s34
Review & Layout
szto Edit

후회하지않아

To Love No Regret

2006. 11. 16.
후회하지않아

"A great film - and one that I've returned to many times. I can't wait to see what the very gifted Leesong Hee-il comes up with next." --- **IMDB (Internet Movie Database)** *Derek McGovern (derekmcgovern@yahoo.com) from New Zealand*

The above quote echoes my sentiment **100 times**. This is the single – and perhaps **only** – Asian live gay-themed **romantic** movie to have been produced! Watch it on the big screen the summer of 2008 when **Regent's here! Films**[1] brings *No Regret* (2006) - Hoo-hoi-ha-ji Hanh-a to North America!

Forget *Brokeback Mountain*, its unwelcomed tragic ending and its spilt milk. *No Regret*, produced and released in South Korea on November 16, 2006, follows a conventional plot of A meets B, A falls in lust with B, B spurns A's advances, A pursues B, and finally A and B get together and live happ…. Ah, I should mention that A (alias Jae-min Song) has a fiancé… What would B (alias Su-min Lee) do?

DISTRIBUTION

South Korea: CJ Entertainment (CJ Entertainment)
Worldwide: Fortissimo Films

Staff Musician: Lee Byung-hoon
Editor, Writer, Director: Lee Song-hee-il
Technicals: 114 min DV Panoramic (1.85)
Web site: http://blog.naver.com/noregret2006 (Korean)

FESTIVALS & AWARDS

Festival(s)

- Official Selection: Berlin Panorama, Pusan
- Hong Kong International Film Festival, Asian Digital Competition

Award(s)

- Best Independent Director of the Year, Director's Cut Awards Korea
- Best Film Award, Ansan International Next Film Festival
- Best New Actor, Critics' Choice Award Korea

Sales or release dates & Box Office
Release date in South Korea: 2006/11/16

후회하지않아
NO REGRET
DVD

Synopsis:

Leaving the country orphanage where he grew up, Su-min comes to Seoul to study design. However, after several tough jobs, he unexpectedly ends up working as a prostitute in a gay bar. There he meets Jae-min. Su-min refuses Jae-min who's been trying everything he could to win Su-min's heart. Jae-min is from a rich and conservative family that doesn't accept his sexual identity. Can this relationship between two men with different backgrounds have a future? After experiencing a brief happiness as passionate lovers, Su-min and Jae-min descend into a tragic state of affairs...

Hmmm... The bedroom scene. See the gun in his hand? :) So amusing what he does with that....

I defer commenting on the sound and picture quality of the video version I had the pleasure to watch. They won't win any Golden Globe for Best Picture but that won't (or rather should not) stop you from enjoying the movie. The volume is very low, perhaps it was because of the encoding or some other misfortune, so I had to turn it higher than normal and strain to hear. It is no hardship however, I assure you. And what difference would it make whether I can hear a language I don't even understand? For the background music of course. Lee Byung-hoon, the musician, has done an excellent job in synching wonderful music with appropriate scenes which further enhances your watching experience. I love its opening song: *Live* – song by **VOY** (thanks to *sallycc@aarinfantasy.com* I don't have to rip it out myself because I don't know how to anyway).

I love the dedicated and handsome actors (and actresses), a moving storyline and often humorous dialogues. And thank Heavens above for computerized video programs because without the pause and rewind function I couldn't fully read and understand all that is said. I watched this movie no less than 5 times, by the way; not merely because I want to understand and be able to interpret every action, every word, and every nuance but also because I adore this movie and its simple but charming plot.

Actors **Lee Han** (*Jae-min Song*) and **Lee Young-Hoon** (*Su-Min Lee*) play their roles well. Jae-min Song (*Lee Han*) and Su-Min Lee (*Lee Yeong-Hoon*) come alive onscreen, so much so that I am very much disappointed that they weren't animation characters whose "off-screen" lives can be manipulated by me. But how could my imagination compare to that of Lee Song Hee-Il? *No Regret*'s director and writer Lee Song Hee-Il composes it so that we know Jae-min is in love and in lust only with Su-min. To confirm his feelings, Jae-min tried to have a "siesta" with theoretically a male prostitute but did not (or could not) go through with it. Fortunately for us (because we so love angst), the course of true love never does run smooth.

Subtly, **Lee Song Hee-Il** works in conflicts of society, parents, and the character's own selves in dealing with homosexuality. I personally like the fact that it left out the typical gay-bashing in a typical gay movie of gay individuals because a romance is private and doesn't need to concern meddlesome people. If any of you readers are like me, you are also likely to be fed up with all the gay movies dealing with coming out issues. We are in luck as *No Regret* delivers a story focusing more on the budding and development of a romance rather than spending its time harping on its problems. For those viewers who need more than a spelled out plot, you'll likely be occupied with the task of following the dialogue. You'll have fun figuring out why, among many dialogues, Jae-woo(?) asks Su-min "How will I get up if I have no arms and no legs?"

And unlike *Eternal Summer*, there is a conclusive ending for *No Regret* so you won't be made to wonder what had just happened.

Read more on the discussions of this movie in **Aarinfantasy Forum** (http://www.aarinfantasy.com/forum/showthread.php?t=34686).

Fortissimo Film Sales is an international film, television and video sales organization specializing in the production, presentation, promotion and distribution of unique, award winning and innovative feature films from independent film makers from all over the world.[2]"

here!Films is the theatrical distribution and worldwide sales division of here!Networks, America's premium gay television network.[1]"

IN THE NEWS

Being fascinated as I am with *No Regret*, I spent countless hours on the net for any scrap of news or rumors about this movie. All that I've read further convinced me that I should go and support this movie when it's released in the United States next summer. **Fortissimo Film Sales** announced on October 20th, 2006, almost a month before *No Regret*'s debut in South Korea, that it has "picked up worldwide sales' rights outside Korea to *No Regret* from **DCG+** and **Generation Blue Films** [Production Agents].[2]" Happily, on March 21st, 2007, **Regent here! Films** made its own announcement that it had "acquired rights of *No Regret* from international sales agent Fortissimo Films at the **American Film Market.**[1]" I am especially excited to hear these news and know that *No Regret* deserves every recognition it receives.

Of the 8 Korean Movies featured at the 2007 **Berlin International Film Festival**, each with budgets of 1.2 millions USD to 3 millions USD, with the exception of *Ad Lib Night*'s $300,000 budget, *No Regret* reports the lowest production budget of only 100,000 US Dollars, according to the *Korean Films Observatory* (ed. 21, 2007)[3]. "Despite opening on only six screens, the low-budget film sold 12,126 tickets to gross $84,000 in its first weekend.[4]" A two-weeks limited release of *No Regret* in South Korea attracted 40,000 movie-goers[5], considered a box office hit for independent films, grossed an estimate of $277,000. "Meanwhile, the film also picked up the top award at the **Ansan Intl. Next Film Festival**, a small-scale event launched this year. Chosen from among five digitally shot Korean independent films, *No Regret* will share $108,000 in prize money with two others.[4]" Don't let these small successes fool you into thinking this money is more than enough to make up for what they invested into its production and the crew's tremendous efforts.

You can't possibly think that a movie of this caliber, any movie, actually cost only $100,000, could you? There were talks of stopping production because of insufficient funding. I forgot where I read this[6], but it was rumored that the crews and/or casts took only $500 as their salary[7]. Because of the promise and love of producing *No Regret*, the crews, casts, and members of this production chipped in money of their own to continue this movie to the end.

As they were low on budget, they couldn't very well build expensive props and locations, so they tried to find places suitable and in accordance to the script[8]. The hardest part was in securing a place for the movie's gay host club. They first scouted Seoul for gay host clubs and tried to secure permission to shoot on location but were rejected because these host clubs were reluctant

I don't like people wallowing in self-pity.... but it's much less grating when it's someone who's this gorgeous!

in exposing their own names. The location scouts refused to give up – finally settling on a hostess club instead. There were initially tension and clashes between the club's workers and the crew which turned into supports and understandings for one another after everyone got used to the others' schedule and purpose. The second location they had problems with was Su-min's little loft on the rooftop. The owner had already promised to let them rent it to shoot the movie but due to some misunderstanding or other incident, a different couple moved in and had to be persuaded to live in the nearest motel during the shooting as an alternative. Of course, the production budget was used to pay for their lodging.

Sumin in uniform. That's hot.

Hopefully, when *No Regret* appears on North American big screens it will garner a much bigger audience. Moreover, I hope for the whole production staff to receive their fair share of the profit, or even more, in recognition of their remarkable efforts and the sacrifices they made to bring this movie to us viewers!

See you at the movies

1. **Regent Releasing.** Regent's here! Films Acquires "No Regret" http://www.regentreleasing.com/news.html 21 March 2007.

2. *Mitchell, Wendy.* **Screendaily.** Fortissimo boards world sales for '*No Regret*' http://www.fortissimofilms.com/whatsnew/ 20 October 2006. London.

3. Korean Films at Berlin. **Korean Films Observatory.** Edition 21. http://www.koreanfilm.or.kr/common/modules/Download.jsp?filePath=/eng/publication&fileName=KFOno21.pdf 2007

4. *Paquet, Darcy.* **Variety Asia Online.** "No Regrets" off to a fast start in Korea. http://www.varietyasiaonline.com/content/view/371/53/ 21 November 2006.

5. *Elley, Derek.* **Variety Asia Online.** "No Regret" http://www.varietyasiaonline.com/content/view/743/53/ 08 February 2007.

6. **Source unknown.** If you recognize where this information comes from, please post it in the Aarinfantasy Forum No Regret discussion thread: http://www.aarinfantasy.com/forum/showthread.php?t=34686

7. *Anonymous.* **Filmmaker Magazine: Blog.** http://www.filmmakermagazine.com/blog/2007/02/berlinale-2-welcome-to-korea.php#3826444660275787911 18 February 2007.

Articles of Interest

A more plotted out synopsis of No Regret.
Elley, Derek. **Variety Asia Online.** "No Regret" http://www.varietyasiaonline.com/content/view/743/53/ 08 February 2007.

If you've read the previous article, this post will explain WHY the movie is "schematic."
Anonymous. **Filmmaker Magazine: Blog.** http://www.filmmakermagazine.com/blog/2007/02/berlinale-2-welcome-to-korea.php#3826444660275787911 18 February 2007.

A – different – and shorter review.
Hartzell, Adam. **Korean Film.** "No Regrets" http://www.koreanfilm.org/kfilm06.html#noregrets

Mend These Broken Glasses

“In Taiwan, the gay community is known as the buoliquan, literally ‘glass community,’ while the individuals are called ‘glass boys’ or ‘crystal boys’.[1]”

An Excerpt[1] – **Crystal Boys** – by Hsien-Yung Pai (*translated from Chinese by* **Howard Goldblatt**):

“Of all these youngsters, his life was the most bizarre, and the most tragic…”

Grandpa Guo’s aging, raspy voice suddenly turned mournful and began to flow very, very slowly.

“Phoenix Boy was born in the Wanhua District, near Dragon Mountain Temple. He was a wild kid with no father surname. His mother, a mute who wasn’t very bright, always had a foolish grin on her face when she was around men, but there was something about the way she looked that made her appealing. She was a chubby girl with skin as fair as virgin snow, and everyone called her ‘Sister Dumpling’ because as a little girl she helped her father at his dumpling stand on Huaxi Street next to Dragon Mountain Temple. Her job was to stop potential customers with her grunting noises; everyone thought it was so cute they’d buy a couple of dumplings from her. Even after she grew up she did what she pleased, which included roaming to the brothel district, wearing wooden clogs and nibbling on pieces of roasted squid as she clomped noisily down the street without a care in the world. She’d smile at the men out looking for a good time. Some of the neighborhood thugs took advantage of the fact that she was a mute by dragging her off and raping her, and when she got home she frantically tried to tell her father what had happened with grunts and hand motions; when he saw that her hair was a mess and there was blood on her skirt, he beat her nearly to death. Every time he beat her she’d run off barefoot to Dragon Mountain Temple and sit on the curb to cry. When the neighborhood peddlers saw her crying on the curb they’d look knowingly at each other and comment with a laugh, ‘Sister Dumpling’s been stuck again!’ When she was eighteen, she closed up at dusk one evening as a typhoon threatened and pushed her cart homeward. On the way she ran into a pack of thugs – five in all – who dragged her off, but this time she put up a fight, so they tied her up, knocking out one of her front teeth in the process. When they were finished with her they dumped her in a stagnant ditch behind...

© Renee LeCompte ~ *Maggock* ~ http://elfwood.lysator.liu.se/art/c/h/chomp/phoenix.jpg.html

...Dragon Mountain Temple, where she lay in the filthy water with the storm beating down on her. She finally crawled out and dragged herself home. That was the night she got pregnant. Her father made her take a concoction of local medicine that nearly killed her, but no matter how bad the vomiting and diarrhea got, the fetus hung on. When her time came, she gave birth to a strapping, bawling son after more than two days of agonizing labor. Her father didn't waste a second in wrapping up the bawling baby in straw matting and delivering it to a foundling hospital that very night. Phoenix Boy grew up in a Catholic orphanage in the suburb of Zhonghe.

"Phoenix Boy was a gifted, clever child from the very beginning. He was so smart there was nothing he couldn't learn. The priests taught him the Catechism, and he had it memorized after one reading. One of the brothers at the orphanage, a Henanese named Sun who was particularly fond of him, taught him how to write and read him Bible stories. But with his volatile temper, you'd never know what Phoenix Boy would do; he ran hot and cold, and you couldn't predict if something would please or anger him. A loner by nature, he hardly ever mixed with the other kids, and if one of them angered him, he'd punch first and ask questions later. Eventually, they ganged up on him, but he just let them pelt him with dirt and rocks, without raising a finger in defense, then went over to the sink and cleaned himself off. When Brother Sun asked him why his face was bruised, he kept his mouth shut and didn't say a word. Phoenix Boy bad a strange flaw as a child – he'd suddenly burst out crying, seemingly for no reason at all, and keep it up for hours. He'd cry so hard he'd shake from head to toe. Sometimes, in the middle of the night, he'd sneak off to the little chapel in the orphanage, sit down in one of the pews, and cry to himself. If Brother Sun found him there and asked why he was crying, he'd say he had a pain in his heart, and the only thing that drove it away was crying. As Phoenix Boy grew up, he became more and more perverse all the time. One Christmas night, the director of the orphanage took all the children to a mass in the chapel, but Phoenix Boy refused to go up and take communion. When the director chastised him, he exploded, running up to the altar and smashing several of the ceramic icons. The director restricted him to his room for a week because of what he'd done, and every day Brother Sun knelt with him as they recited the rosary. Phoenix Boy ran away from the orphanage when he was fifteen and never went back.

© Fu Yun ~ http://www.the-gallery-of-china.com/chinese-dragon-painting-11.html

"Phoenix Boy showed up at the park like a wild stallion, charging about with that unbridled power of his, and no one knew how to tame him. Even me he listened to only about a third of the time. Not long after he first showed up he had a run-in with some young thugs with criminal records from Sanchong City, and got stabbed several times. I'm the one who brought him home and nursed him back to health. He'd lie there in bed, rubbing the angry red knife wound in his abdomen, and say to me with a smile:

"'Just a little deeper, Grandpa Guo, and you could've been spared a lot of trouble!'

"Phoenix Boy, he was really a child of the park, a wild phoenix, just like his name. He cruised the steps of the lotus pond, his black mane-like hair uncombed, his head high, his chest thrown out, like everybody else was beneath his notice. A lot of the old-timers fell under his spell, including Lord Sheng from the Eternal Youth Film Studio.

Lord Sheng wanted him for his own, so he took him to his home on Eight Virtues Road, where he made him over from head to toe; he took him to a Shanghai tailor shop in Westgate and ordered a custom-made gray flannel suit, then went to a jewelry store and bought him a Rolex watch with a silver case. Once he'd turned him into someone who looked like the young scion of a wealthy family, Long Sheng took him to the best Western restaurants in town. He wanted to make something of the boy, and planned to send him to school to learn the ropes about movies and someday become a film star. But our young wild phoenix lived in Lord Sheng's home all of one week before he came flying back to the park. He'd pawned the suit and the watch for several thousand, so he took all his wild friends over to Chief Yang's restaurant, Taoyuan Spring, and ordered a meal for two tables. They ate and drank like there was no tomorrow, until they were stuffed and drunk. Then he climbed up on one of the tables and began to sing '*Flowers in the Rainy Night*.' Just when everyone was clapping, shouting and having a wonderful time, he jumped down off the table and walked out without a word.

"He was unpredictable, and the people in the park knew it so, they were careful not to do anything that might set him off. When he was eighteen, the fateful meeting occurred between him and the son of a high-ranking official, an only son named Dragon Prince, after the sign under which he was born. Handsome, well born, a college graduate who had a job in a foreign company and was planning to go overseas for more schooling, his future looked bright. Meeting up with Phoenix Boy was something no one could have predicted, particularly since sparks flew, and nothing could put out the fire. Dragon Prince rented an apartment at the end of Songjiang Road, where he quietly built a little nest to hide Phoenix Boy. Back then, that part of Songjiang Road was no more than rice paddies, which extended right up to the main building where they lived, giving them a panoramic view of lush green rice sprouts. The two of them would run out into the paddies, barefoot and shirtless, to dig up snails and loaches or sit down in the muddy field and share a muskmelon. Those were happy times for the two of them. But it wasn't in the wild phoenix's nature to stay in his nest like a good little fledgling, and sometimes he'd fly back to the park in the middle of the night to sit on the stone railing of the lotus pond and look up into the sky, counting the stars. Dragon Prince would follow him over and try to get him to come home, but he'd say, 'This is my home, so where do you want me to go?' Dragon Prince was as hot-tempered as he was, and without another word, the two of them would tear into each other, fighting until their clothes were in shreds. When it was over, they'd sit on the steps, holding each other and wailing. Everyone laughed and said they were 'love crazy.' Often, during those days, Dragon Prince would jump in a taxi and ride all over Taipei, asking everyone he knew, 'Have you seen Phoenix Boy?' Since some of the people he asked were either jealous or enjoyed seeing other people suffer, they'd make up things like 'Phoenix Boy went over to New South Seas' or

© Unknown?

'Phoenix Boy went with somebody for a late snack at Taoyuan Spring.' 'Phoenix Boy? Didn't he go off with Lord Sheng?' Dragon Prince invariably believed them and went looking for him where they'd said, sometimes until the sun came up the next morning, when he'd drag himself back to the park, dejected and forlorn, and anxiously pace the steps of the lotus pond from one end to the other.

"Phoenix Boy came over here one night, his face ashen, his sunken eyes looking like they were going to jump out of their sockets.

"'Grandpa Guo...' The pain in his voice was unmistakable. 'I have to leave him. If I don't, he's going to reduce me to a pile of ashes. When I ask him what he wants, he says, I want that heart of yours. I tell him I was born without one. So he says, Then I'll give you mine. Honest, I'm really afraid that one day he's going to rip that thing right out of his chest and stuff it into mine. Grandpa Guo, you know I've spent most of my life running away. I ran away from the orphanage and came over to hang out in the park. I couldn't ask for a nicer place than the apartment he rented for me on Songjiang Road. And he sneaked a lot of things out of his home for me: electric fan, electric rice cooker, sofa, even his own TV, so I wouldn't be bored at night. But... but for some reason I can't stay there. All I think about is coming to the park. Grandpa Guo, I was fifteen when I started out. The first time I slept with someone I got a disease, and it was you that took me to Taipei Municipal Hospital for a penicillin shot, remember? Well, I ask him, This dirty, diseased body of mine, what do you want it for? So, he says, I'll lick every speck of dirt from your body, and I'll wash away all the disease with my tears. That's the talk of a madman, isn't it? I tell him, Not in this lifetime, but the next time around I'll get myself born into a good family and pay you back then. Grandpa Guo, I have to get out, fly away, start running again!'

"Phoenix Boy disappeared from sight for over two months, and Dragon Prince scoured the city for him, until his eyes were red and had the look of madness in them. Then late one night – New Year's Eve, it was – he found Phoenix Boy near the lotus pond. Phoenix Boy was leaning up against a stone railing, wearing a thin shirt in the cold night air and shivering. He was talking to an ugly, fat old man whose breath reeked of alcohol, trying to agree on a price. The old sot offered him fifty, and he was just about to go with him, when Dragon Prince ran up and blocked his way, begging him to come home with him. Phoenix Boy just shook his head and gazed helplessly into Dragon Prince's eyes. So Dragon Prince grabbed his hand and said, 'Then give me back my heart!' Phoenix Boy pointed to his own chest and said, 'It's here, take it.' Well, Dragon Prince took out a knife and plunged it into Phoenix Boy's chest. Phoenix Boy slumped to the ground, blood gushing out of his chest..."

"What happened then?" I asked haltingly after a long pause.

"What happened..." Grandpa Guo's raspy voice was trembling. "Dragon Prince sat down in the puddle of blood and held Phoenix Boy in his arms. His mind has snapped."

---

1. Goldblatt, Howard. **Crystal Boys.** A novel by Pai, Hsien-Yung. Gay Sunshine Press. San Francisco. Second Printing 1995. Pages 76-81.

Crystal Boys

DISTRIBUTION
Taiwan Public Television Service Foundation

Publisher
Warner (HK)

【公視文學大戲】
孽子
Crystal Boys

Staff
Music: Fan Zong-pei & Lin Hai
Director: Tsao Jui-yuan
Fan Chi-wei (as A-Qing)

Technicals

Crystal Boys
Episodes: 20 (End)
Length: 56 minutes each episodes
Language: Mandarin
Screen Format: 4:3
Sound Mix: Dolby Digital

Web site
http://www.pts.org.tw/~web01/boys/ (Mandarin)
http://www.pts.org.tw/php/_utility/ehomepage/detail.php?XHAENO=15 (English)

FESTIVAL(S) & AWARD(S)
Festivals

Awards
- Best TV Series Award + 5 others - *Golden Bell Awards*

Sales or release dates & Box Office
- Release date in Taiwan:
February 17, 2003
- DVD Release Date:
December 17, 2003

Synopsis

Drama series, 56min x 20, Mandarin version, 2003. Based on the classic novel, written by Pai Hsien-yung, this adaptation of Crystal Boys, the 20-episode-drama series portrays a journey of the heart that begins one summer afternoon in 1974, described first person from the mouth of the protagonist A-Qing, who's a young man mature for his age, struggling with the self against the contradictions and conflicts in individual, family and community values in the highly repressive world of 1970s Taiwan.

No insightful comment here. The pace of this drama is SLOW. And since I don't comprehend Mandarin (spoken or subtitled), I cannot understand what is being said to fully appreciate the stories and emotions infused in each of these scenes. Despite all the good reviews out there and this drama being the first of its kind, I cannot sit through the whole 20 episodes because it is mind-numbingly BORING!!!

No, not the drama itself. It's just maddening, sitting there and pretending to grasp what's going on. An episode drags on eternally! And speaking of being awkward! There are no emotional connections between the supposedly gay couples. Even the intimate scene between A-Qing (Fan Chi-wei) and his friend (Tony Yang Yo Ning) is disappointing as it was made to look like a fight between guy friends. From the 10 episodes I watched, that is probably the only piece of action you will see in a very long while. Only watch this if 1) you know Chinese; or 2) when it is subbed in English or the language of your choice.

The absence of romantic chemistry between these characters may be what the author and director seek so as to portray not the romance but rather simply the daily lives of how a gay community subsists. Instead of focusing on the question of who will be with whom, this drama provides answers to questions such as: why do these angels only come out at night? What are their stories? And how do they cope with other people's demeaning views of their community?

For a better, more enthusiastic idea about what is going on, you may want to read **Pai Hsien-yung**'s objective in the writings of his novel (*Taiwan Public Television Service*[2]). Keep in mind that the story is not focusing on the homosexual relationships themselves but more on the relationships between humans in same situations. "Uproar, sympathy, pity and helplessness at the outset of this 20-episode adaptation of the classic novel **Crystal Boys** whose characters live through struggle and regret over relationships with parents and friends, over love and human nature, trying to find a way to live amidst the tumult of survival, desire and remorse, and finally gain deliverance and hope, is the main spiritual dwelling place of this drama series."

Ignorant as I am, even I can appreciate the efforts the whole production staff put into recreating the feel of the 1970s Taiwan era. Think of the countless hours spent "creating 80 different sets for the series[3]" –the manpower bent into finishing these sceneries and the research that went before it to get an idea of how Taiwan actually looked like in the 1970s. "They rebuilt a movie theater and changed its billboard to advertise a Bruce Lee film. They went to Hsin-chu to find an old, unrenovated veteran's village for soldiers from the mainland. And several sets were reconstructed in modern cabaret houses in order to get the old cabaret in Hsimenting just right[3]."

As for the actors and a couple of supporting actresses, I find them exceptional in portraying their roles. The relationship between A-Qing and his father is so touching I shed tears seeing their estrangement. It reminds me of this one comment on television made just days before from a wife of a soldier who just returned from his tours in Iraq, "My [child] will grow up not knowing why her dad is angry all the time for no reason." That is what unfolded between A-Qing and his father – the difference in their expectations of each other – the generation gap. Hsien-Yung (Kenneth) Pai commented that "Wing Fan is exactly like Lee Qing ([A-Qing]) [the main character] in my book[3]." Maybe it is so to him, and the writer knows their characters best, but to this reader Fan Chi-wei (Wing Fan) doesn't quite

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Crystal Boys
孽子
Crystal Boys
公視文學大戲・華文文學巨擘 白先勇唯一長篇力作小說「孽子」
| Desktop Photos for screen resoulation of 1024x7680 |
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match my formulation of what A-Qing looks like and still, when I read the novel, I cannot picture Chi-wei as A-Qing.

However, just reading about the rave reviews and due to the nature of this work, I succumbed and bought the novel. It is a piece of literature – the symbolism, the ground-breaking subject of its time, and the well-developed characters. The translation is very well crafted so no awkwardness or gap can be detected. Though the novel consists of many retellings and flashbacks, it was woven so fluidly that it has not lost me yet. On the contrary, it captivated me so much that I tried to push myself to complete watching the series. Alas, I still cannot do it. If the drama series is as effective in communicating the personal struggles of these characters as presented in the novel, **Crystal Boys**, the drama series certainly deserves every praise – just not from me. Not yet.

So should you even bother watching it? As stated: "Only watch if 1) you know Chinese; or 2) when it is subbed in English or the language of your choice." And very luckily, but not definitely, someone is working on this project as I am writing this article. Remember, this is only a rumor. It has been a couple of months now that I heard of this and no further progress was reported so all we can do is hope for the best. Let's hope that some more people become interested and collaborate to hasten the subbing. Being a spoiled and devoted leecher, I cannot wait to watch it when it is subbed in English. So, good luck, capable people of the boy love community. We will just have to wait and see.

n0rth_s34 Review & Layout
szto Editor

Works Cited

2. Taiwan Public Television Service. **Crystal Boys**. http://eng.pts.org.tw/detail.php?XHAENO=15

3. Yu, Sen-lun. **Nostalgia For the Bad Old Days**. Taipei Times. Taipei, Taiwan, ROC. http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/feat/archives/2003/02/16/194832 Sunday, 16 February, 2003. Page 17.

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Crystal Boys
Desktop Photos for screen resolution of 1024x768
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Crystal Boys playlist by *Yoyochen* http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=B42C261347F00872 (10 episodes. Find the rest by seeing all her uploaded movies.)

Come to *Aarinfantasy.com/forum* to discuss whether you find this movie more interesting than I did.

IKOKU IROKOI ROMANTAN

The Romantic Tale of a Foreign Love Affair

Date of Release:
21 Dec 2007

aarinsecret.com

Translation: Henna
Layout: Aarin

The popular manga,
Ikoku Irokoi Romantan
異国色恋浪漫譚
by Yamane Ayano
is made into anime!

Cast

Oumi Ranmaru : Itou Kentarou
Albert Valentino : Suwabe Junichi
Gondou Ryuuji : Okiayu Ryuutarou
Oumi Kaoru : Kawakami Tomoko

Translated from the official website of Ikoku Irokoi Romantan:

A marriage ceremony aboard a luxury liner.

On his first night as a husband, the third underboss of the Oumi Group, Ranmaru, is kicked out of his bedroom by his wife Kaoru, who is dissatisfied with the marriage. Sulking over Kaoru's callous behavior, Ranmaru begins drinking at the bar. There, he meets a mysterious Italian named Albert.

Al is bold and unreserved, and he has a passionate obsession with Japan.

Ranmaru initially thinks he's a strange guy, but in time he becomes caught up in Al's pace and is swept away.

豪華客船での結婚式。

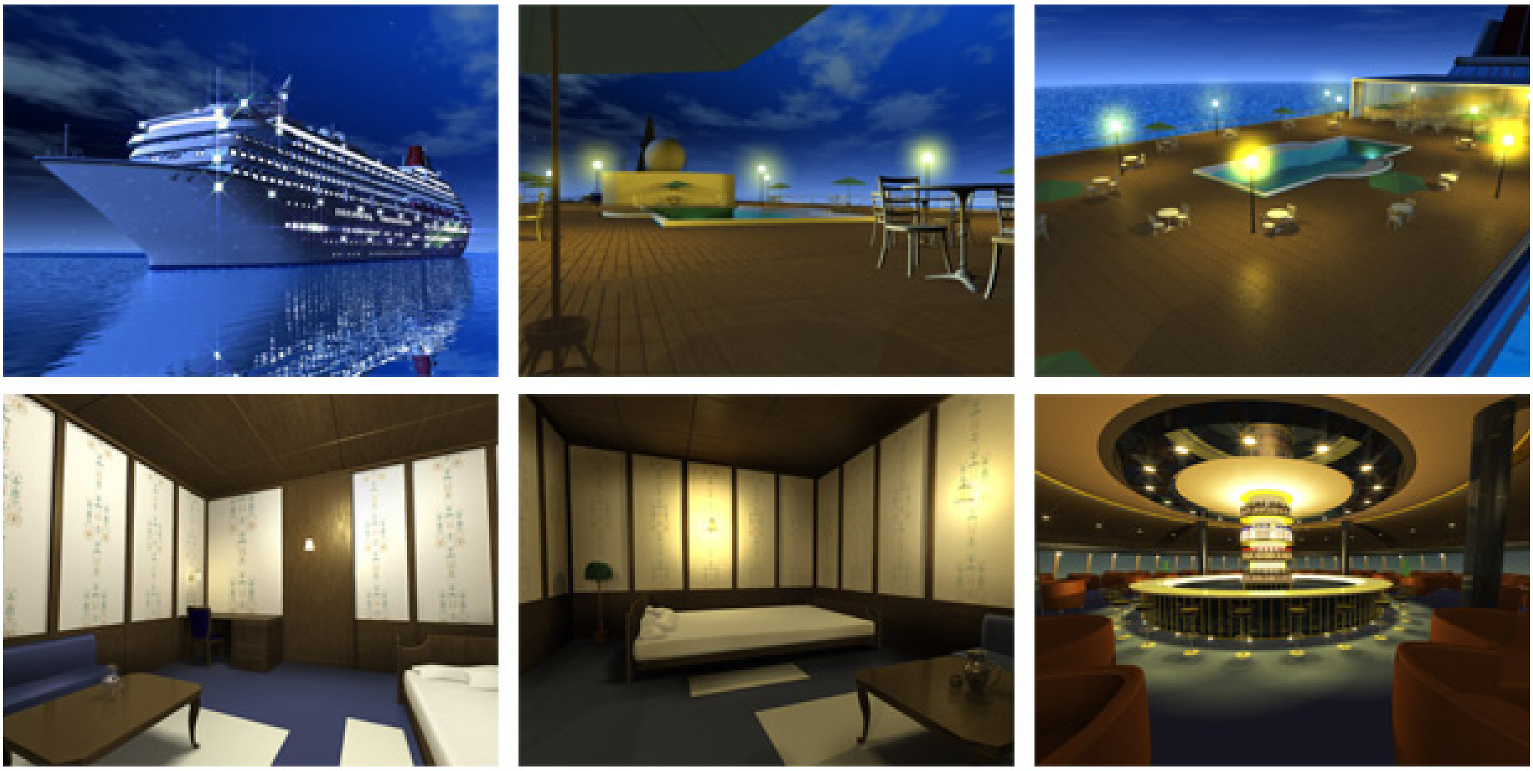
そして新婚初夜、近江組三代目若頭・鸞丸は、結婚が気に入らず不機嫌な妻の薫に寝室から蹴り出されてしまう。

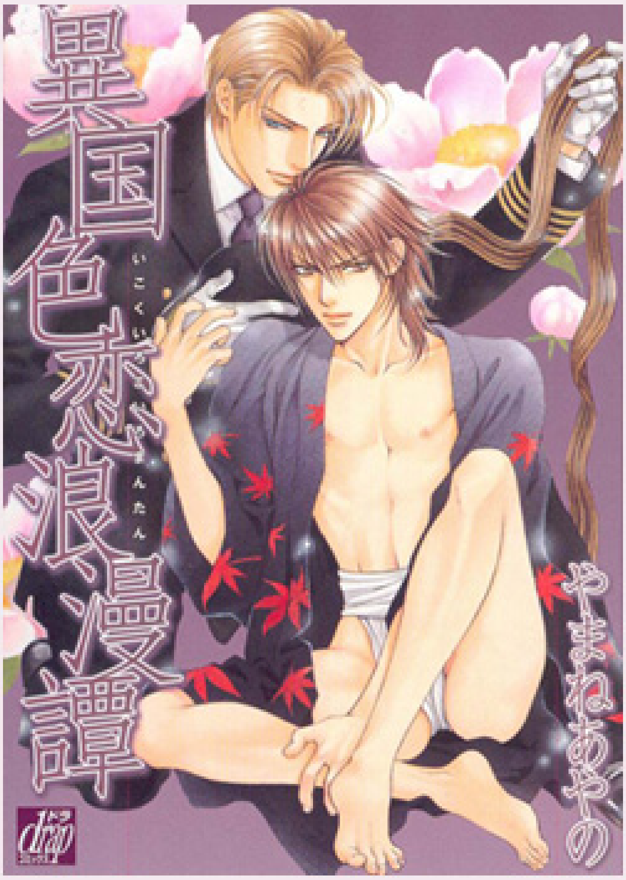
薫のあまりの仕打ちに、不貞腐れてバーで飲んでいた鸞丸は、不思議なイタリア人、アルベルトと出会う。人見知りしないアルは熱烈な「日本おたく」で、最初は変なヤツだと思っていた鸞丸も、次第にアルのペースに乗せられ流されていくのだった。

IKOKU IROKOI ROMANTAN

The Romantic Tale of a Foreign Love Affair

CG1 shown on the official website of Ikoku Irokoi Romantan anime. Rumor said it might be partly in 3D because of these screenshots, but many think it may just be some promotional attractions.




異国色恋浪漫譚
いこくいろこいろまんたん
やまねあやの
drap

Manga - Ikoku Irokoi Romantan

Year Released: 2003; No. of volume(s): 1 ;No. of chapter(s): 5
Genre: Yaoi, comedy, yakuza

Review by monia:

Italy, a cruise, a handsome and interesting man who turns out to be the captain... would anyone ask for more to make it a perfect romantic foreign love affair? I doubt it... But what happens if it turns out that you're actually on honeymoon, Italians consider you as a reminiscence of Japan's feudal times, you get lost and sold at auctions as a sex doll? For sure you'd love that sexy captain to rescue you. Ikoku Irokoi Romantan is a one volume manga where passion and tension grow each page as you read it and the set is just perfect: Florence first and Rome later will be background for the feelings shared by the main characters, and Al the seducer is going to do his best to make Ranmaru fall for him. Will he succeed? Well, you can guess, this is the romantic tale of a foreign love affair after all.

http://www.aarinfantasy.com/content/view/67/42/

Top 10 Guys

Results were determined by survey polls from aarinfantasy.com from November 2006 - July 2007.

Naruto

1	**Kakashi**
2	**Sasuke**
3	**Naruto**
4	**Gaara**
5	**Shikamaru**
6	**Itachi**
7	**Neji**
8	**Kiba**
9	**Rock Lee**
10	**Orochimaru**

" We love Kakashi because he knows the 1000 Years Pain technique! "

Bleach

1	**Abarai Renji**
2	**Ichigo Kurosaki**
3	**Kuchiki Byakuya**
4	**Ishida Uryuu**
5	**Toshirou Hitsugaya**
6	**Kyouraku Shunsui**
7	**Urahara Kisuke**
8	**Kira Izuru**
9	**Ayasegawa Yumichika**
10	**Aizen Sousuke**

" Renji has sexy-licious body and tattoos! "

↑ Yuki from **Kaikan Phrase** is one of fans' fav picks from the boys of the anime

Prince of Tennis

1	**Ryoma Echizen**
2	**Shusuke Fuji**
3	**Kunimitsu Tezuka**
4	**Eiji Kikumaru**
5	**Keigo Atobe**
6	**Kaoru Kaidoh**
7	**Takeshi Momoshiro**
8	**Shuichiro Oishi**
9	**Sadaharu Inui**
10	**Nanijiroh Echizen**

" Ryoma is cute and gets all the guys' attention! "

Final Fantasy 7: Advent Children

1	**Cloud**
2	**Sephiroth**
3	**Vincent**
4	**Reno**
5	**Kadaj**
6	**Rufus**
7	**Yazoo**
8	**Loz**
9	**Rude**
10	**Cid**

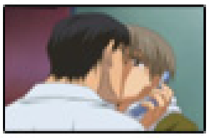
" Cloud is the ultimate cool guy! "

Top 20 Anime

Results were determined by survey polls from aarinfantasy.com from November 2006 - July 2007. The TOP 20 poll was conducted before March 2007 and therefore only includes yaoi/BL/slash anime titles released up to that date.

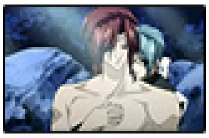
Top 5 - Yaoi/BL/Slash Anime (2007)

1 **Close the Last Door!**
Saigo no Door wo Shimero!
OVA1-??

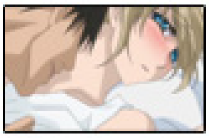


2 **Winter Cicada**
Fuyu no Semi
OVA1-3

3 **Saint Beast**
Kouin Jojishi Tenshitan
Ep1-13



4 **Okane Ga Nai**
No Money
OVA1-??



5 **Koutetsu Sangokushi**
Ep1-25

Scanlation Group:
Blissful Sin

Blissful Sin
a sinful desire...

Blissful Sin is a non-profit BL scanlation group. Bringing you yummy shounen-ai/yaoi manga scanlations. Although we're a new group, we're hoping to spread more smex in the near future.

www.blissful-sin.com

1 Loveless
2 Gravitation
3 Sensitive Pornograph
4 Yami no Matsuei
5 Gakuen Heaven
6 Papa to Kiss in the Dark
7 Kyou Kara Maou
8 Sukisyo
9 Ai no Kusabi
10 Haru wo Daiteita
11 Princess-Princess
12 Okane Ga Nai
13 Mirage of Blaze
14 Boku no Pico
15 Fake
16 Zetsuai/Bronze
17 Enzai
18 Kizuna
19 Level C
20 Fujimi Orchestra

YAOI Word Hunt!

Have some spare time? Then, why not try this word hunt puzzle? There are 30 yaoi or shounen-ai related words in this puzzle. They are placed in 8 ways:

⇆ ↑↓ ↖ ↙ ↘ ↗

Can you find them all?

Done by: kriska22

S	A	R	I	S	A	L	S	E	M	A	B	H	D	E	I	E	L	O	B	E	W	N	T	C	O	L	N	A	N
U	M	I	B	R	O	N	E	P	O	T	O	O	K	Z	U	N	M	T	K	G	E	O	I	V	U	I	F	K	A
K	O	K	T	O	L	Z	N	W	Q	R	T	T	Y	N	I	S	U	O	X	N	M	D	L	T	S	U	J	U	K
I	K	K	I	R	G	D	Z	C	O	Q	W	A	B	O	I	S	C	K	U	M	O	A	O	L	P	T	B	A	A
S	O	R	V	A	B	U	S	U	X	T	V	S	H	R	W	A	N	O	N	K	E	T	U	N	E	S	Z	R	M
Y	A	M	A	N	E	A	Y	A	N	O	H	H	G	B	H	I	H	U	I	E	Y	F	E	V	L	U	I	U	A
O	R	M	A	L	K	W	E	S	C	P	F	T	R	R	B	S	L	D	L	F	S	I	A	M	Y	K	E	K	D
G	U	Y	A	M	A	A	V	I	G	O	Z	I	A	M	I	P	O	E	R	S	A	R	O	S	E	U	Z	A	E
C	G	N	B	K	S	J	I	R	N	A	R	K	E	B	Q	K	P	E	I	N	G	K	R	M	E	S	H	S	E
H	A	E	D	Z	D	B	E	A	D	N	K	A	D	C	I	S	H	L	P	S	U	K	C	N	Y	H	T	A	A
I	N	Z	I	S	W	E	B	M	A	C	B	U	R	O	L	A	B	A	Y	H	I	S	X	O	T	I	V	K	M
F	A	K	E	M	O	N	G	D	O	K	E	E	E	I	U	K	D	Y	E	N	O	M	O	N	L	I	D	I	N
O	T	Y	L	U	L	F	S	J	Q	Y	D	P	Z	N	P	K	T	T	R	U	A	T	R	B	I	O	G	H	G
G	F	D	X	F	X	L	J	P	Q	N	K	F	D	O	H	N	N	N	A	Q	E	L	A	Y	Y	T	R	S	A
C	E	W	E	S	E	G	L	K	I	X	L	G	M	O	O	E	C	E	Z	E	L	F	G	R	O	O	U	A	K
O	N	K	S	R	N	H	O	F	M	B	I	S	H	O	V	J	A	R	S	O	R	I	A	M	U	K	W	I	U
V	O	Q	G	S	Z	Y	W	I	V	T	N	O	I	T	A	T	I	V	A	R	G	N	C	O	E	O	X	R	I
R	M	N	I	I	A	E	U	T	S	U	K	U	S	K	H	E	A	V	E	N	E	D	C	X	L	F	S	C	O
B	O	U	L	N	I	T	A	R	I	S	A	W	A	K	O	N	W	A	A	N	B	I	N	O	M	O	N	E	B
M	L	R	B	V	N	A	K	A	U	R	W	I	L	J	U	I	T	L	L	E	P	S	N	O	S	M	I	R	C

Word Bank

Sukisyo
Rikki
Kai
Amoi
Yamane Ayano
Guys
Tanagura
Fake
Arisawa
Mongrels
Dee Laytner
Enzai
Bronze
Abdiel
Gakuen Heaven
Gravitation
Dokidoki
Utsukushii Otoko
Nakama
Crimson Spell
Ashika Sakura
ViewFinder
Blissful Sin
Color
Bois
No Money
Bishounen

The last three words were left unmentioned. See if you can find them. Remember it must be something related to yaoi (game, manga, character, etc.)

Thanks to brushes.obsidiandawn.com, itsuji.net and komettails.net for the brushes.